MOMMIE DEAREST

A screenplay by

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SHOOTING SCRIPT

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MOMMIE DEAREST

FADE IN:

1 INT. JOAN'S BATHROOM - BRENTWOOD HOUSE 1938 - PRE-DAWN

UNDER TITLES a SERIES OF EXTREMELY CLOSE SHOTS:

EXTREME CLOSEUP a hand turns a light switch in the darkened bathroom;

EXTREME CLOSEUP same hand plugs one end of an electrical cord into a wall socket;

EXTREME CLOSEUP same hand takes the other end of the cord and plugs it into an early General Electric coffee percolator, 1937 model;

EXTREME CLOSEUP a large electric clock; it reads 4:15;

SOUND EFFECTS BIRDS CHIRP in the darkness outside the window;

EXTREME CLOSEUP two hands turn on steamy hot water from a fancy gold tap;

EXTREME CLOSEUP two hands open a refrigerator and remove a cannister of ice cubes and a bottle of distilled water;

EXTREME CLOSEUP same two hands empty ice cubes into a large, elegant porcelain bowl and place it next to the steamy basin;

EXTREME CLOSEUP the coffee begins to perk;

EXTREME CLOSEUP same hands pour distilled water over ice cubes and sprinkle rock salt on the mixture to make it colder;

EXTREME CLOSEUP same hands scrubbing furiously with soap, water and scrub brush;

EXTREME CLOSEUP same two soapy hands come up to Joan's face which she soaps furiously. This is our first view of JOAN CRAWFORD.

CLOSEUP the coffee, like Joan, is perking furiously;

EXTREME CLOSEUP the hands which are now rinsed, plunge into the bowl of ice;

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: 1

EXTREME CLOSEUP the hands lift icy water and ice cubes onto Joan's face which is a few inches over the porcelain bowl. We feel the brutal shock of the icy water as it hits her surgically clean face.

CUT TO:

2 EXT. CRAWFORD BRENTWOOD HOME - DAWN 2

MAIN TITLES continue to roll as Joan comes out of her house and gets into the back seat of a waiting studio limousine. There is a trace of dawn in the east -- but it's still quite dark. The car drives off and down Bristol Avenue in the direction of Culver City.

CUT TO:

3 CLOSEUP - JOAN 3

in the back seat of the limousine, not letting a minute go to waste. Under the dim overhead light in the car, Joan is autographing a stack of 8 x 10 photos of herself. One after another, she writes in her bold flourishing script, the same legend:

"Yours always, Joan Crawford."

While she works and TITLES CONTINUE, the car wends its way through the sleepy streets...

4 EXT. METRO GATES 4

... and pulls in through the Metro gates.

The lot is not yet alive as the limousine drives down the long narrow streets between the giant sound stages.

5 EXT. SOUND STAGE 5

The car pulls up. Joan gets out and moves...

6 INT. STAGE 6

... across a vast stage which contains an enormous ice rink. This is the set for Ice Follies of 1939 which Joan is currently shooting.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: 6

It is still one-and-a-half hours before the crew call so the stage is empty, quiet and dark. Joan continues to her onstage dressing room.

MORE MAIN TITLES as Joan steps up to her dressing room, whose door swings wide for her and she gives a workmanlike nod to her hairdresser, dresser and maid.

7 INT. DRESSING ROOM 7

The routine here is unvarying and her staff is practiced. Joan takes off her coat and blouse, puts on a smock and sits in elaborate makeup chair. Like drones buzzing around the queen, or handlers preparing a race horse or prizefighter, the three go to work on the star.

SERIES OF EXTREME CLOSEUPS. Her makeup being applied: big detail on lipstick, mascara, eyebrows, etc. At the same time hair preparation for an elaborate, glamorous coiffure.

SERIES OF CUTS continue as Joan is dressed in a sexy military skater's costume.

FINAL TITLE rolls over the lacing and tightening of a pair of high white kid-glove leather figure skates. As the final lace is tightened and meets with Joan's satisfaction, MAIN TITLES END.

CUT TO:

8 INT. MGM SOUND STAGE - ICE RINK - LATER THAT MORNING 8

A production number for the Ice Follies is approaching its climax. Joan, skating well, leads a team of costumed women skaters who whirl behind her in a difficult ice number. The conceit is battle. The skaters wear sexy toy soldier costumes.

The playback SPEAKERS BLARE a rousing military MARCH, complete with snare drum rolls, tympani and tubas.

Joan leads a gymnastic battle. The action increases in pace and difficulty.

SERIES OF CUTS as we set up an impending accident: a skater's epaulet comes loose, dangles by a thread. This is established while we CUT BACK AND FORTH between flips, turns, spins, leaps of combat. Then we CUT BACK to the epaulet which drops off and lands on the ice.

CUT TO:

8 CONTINUED: 8

Joan, who is skating all stops out, heading right for the epaulet which she doesn't see.

SEVERAL QUICK CUTS of the number and back to CLOSEUPS of Joan's skate heading for the epaulet.

She takes a terrible spill, windmilling across the ice, landing in a crumpled heap. The number is cut immediately as the director, various assistants, technicians and fellow skaters crowd around the fallen star. It doesn't look good for Joan as we...

CUT TO:

9 INT. DRESSING ROOM - MGM - DAY 9

Joan is in great pain. She is stretched out on a chaise. An air of calamity is elsewhere.

Her dresser, her maid, the film's director, TED AMES, and a trainer hover anxiously as the studio DOCTOR completes the examination. Now the trainer packs ankle and foot in ice, blankets Joan against shock.

FULL SHOT -- the dressing room doors open and BRIAN GOLD, the producer, appears. He is 45, smart, successful, fashionable.

REVERSE ANGLE - FULL SHOT FAVORING Joan as all eyes turn upon the producer, he closes the door gently. ANGLE NARROWING as vivid with concern and sympathy he goes to Joan, takes her hand, squeezes it tenderly.

He kneels compassionately beside her.

BRIAN
Joanie...
(soothing her)
Pain. Dear girl. Pain. Lots of pain?

JOAN
(a bruised smile)
Let's say it hurts, Brian.

TIGHT TWO SHOT face to face, their clasped hands between them as he kneels there.

BRIAN
Relax, take it easy. Brian's here.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED: 9

BRIAN (CONT'D)
(without looking back)
Doc.

ANGLE WIDENS as the Doctor's face ENTERS THE FRAME and Joan and Brian look at him.

DOCTOR
Possible fracture, Mr. Gold.

Joan is watching Brian.

DOCTOR
(continuing)
We need an x-ray.

BRIAN
Very possible?

DOCTOR
We need an x-ray.

ANGLE WIDENS LOW, SHOOTING past Joan to Brian Gold. He still holds a hand to comfort her as he stands up to face the Doctor who is now IN THE FRAME again.

BRIAN
Say we're lucky, Doc, when can she go on again?

DOCTOR
Two... three weeks, depending.

FULL SHOT FAVORING Joan who watches now in a totally different way. Brian is shooing everyone out.

BRIAN
Everybody, please?

REVERSE ANGLE, never losing Joan as Brian closes the door behind them.

The door is shut. Brian is facing Joan who very slowly, always watching him, leans back against her clustered pillows. The Doctor observes quietly from across the room.

ANGLE NARROWS as Brian comes up. They both look at her foot encased in ice and then each other. Brian begins to pace, furiously.

9 CONTINUED: (2) 9

JOAN
(without a pause)
Let me think out loud for you. We're only four days into the picture. We can start over with Betty Grable. The insurance will cover the loss. The cast is set, the skaters are rehearsed. We're in business. I can still have my picture. I always wanted Grable anyway. I went with Crawford because I couldn't say no. I'll smile at her. I'll hold her hand and I'll dump her.
(a pause)
How am I doing?

Brian sits down without saying a word but smiles.

BRIAN
Facts.

He gets up. He's there, he's being polite but he's on his way. He's going and in his mind she's gone.

BRIAN
(continuing; with feeling)
You'll get lots of sympathy. Letters, fan mail, lots of press. L. B. will say it's a great loss.

JOAN
I'm not getting dumped from this picture.

BRIAN
(pointing to her foot)
Talk to it, not me.

He's at the door.

JOAN
(exploding)
Where the hell you going?

BRIAN
I can't hide this from L.B.

JOAN
For Christsakes, Brian.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED: (3) 9

BRIAN

What choice have I got?

JOAN

You're not throwing me off the picture. No one's replacing me. I'll get out there and we'll do the wide shot and after that you can put me on a platform with blades and you can do the tight stuff and move me around with a couple of grips below the frame line.

(to the Doctor)

You got novocaine?

DOCTOR

You'd only buy a few hours. I think you're hurt pretty bad.

JOAN

I'll take what I can get...

BRIAN

Wait a minute.

JOAN

Brian, you want your picture made? Get down on the set and tell Ted I'll be there in a half hour. And, Brian... I'll skate the hell out of it.

Brian exits. Joan turns to the Doctor, who is preparing the injection.

CUT TO:

10 INT. MGM - DAY (LATER) 10

Joan makes her entrance from dressing room, in fierce pain, limping badly. Word has spread so that a number of people from other productions including actors in various costumes have come to witness what has the potential to be a major moment in Metro's history and Crawford's career. Crawford, playing the heroine to the hilt, stops and asks solicitously about members of the crew, walking gingerly, as if nothing unusual had happened. She's doing "stiff upper lip" with a vengeance. It's not difficult to see why every stagehand she ever worked with adored her.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED: 10

She passes camera crew, gives them a big smile. She moves out to her mark on the ice. The rest of the cast and dress extras are all in place worshipfully. A great silence falls on the set.

TED
We'll try to get it in one take, Joan.

JOAN
We'll do it until it's right.

The great Crawford gives him a wink and the Hollywood litany begins: "QUIET ON THE SET!" "LET'S HAVE BELLS!" (BELLS GO.) "CAMERA!" "SLATE IT!" (The sticks slap.) "PLAYBACK!" The MUSIC STARTS and comes to speed. Now, finally, "ACTION," and Joan Crawford is skating and Joan Crawford has never been better. She is extraordinary, fighting through her pain, super-conscious of her audience, transported by the admiration of all who are witnessing her courage. There isn't a person on the sound stage who doesn't know that this is a movie star.

CUT TO:

11 THE STAGE 11

The number finishes.

TED
(bellowing)
Cut!

And he leads the applause as the entire sound stage erupts in cheers.

CUT TO:

12 INT. SOUND STAGE - LONG SHOT - HIGH ANGLE - NIGHT 12

Night lights. Emptiness. The big doors open. Strange shadows. The eerie sense of unknown space. Only Joan's dressing room is lit and now, like ants, a wheelchair is lifted out of Joan's dressing room.

12A CLOSE MOVING SHOT 12A

Two powerful grips set the wheelchair down gently with Ted and trainer nearby. All men. The women are gone.

(CONTINUED)

12A CONTINUED: 12A

Joan wears a coat over her shoulders, her bared ankle is stretched out and packed in ice.

JOAN
(pointing outside
through the open
doors)
Who's out there?

TED
Nobody.

JOAN
Any word from Brian or Mayer?

TED
No.

JOAN
You call?

TED
You told me not to.

JOAN
It's damn quiet around here.

MOVING LONG SHOT

FAVORING Joan, SHOOTING toward the open doors as they wheel her toward them. Now headlights suddenly appear and a chauffeured car stops behind the one waiting for Joan. A door opens and closes in the shadows and, as the little entourage reaches the edge of the stage, a VOICE comes out of the shadows.

GREG'S VOICE
Joan?

Joan is transformed.

JOAN
(crying out)
Greg.

She bursts into tears and everybody fades slowly as a man appears out of the shadow.

GREG
Excuse us a minute, please.

(CONTINUED)

12A CONTINUED: (2) 12A

GREG SAVITT is a top labor lawyer, currently at the height of his power. He's rugged, handsome, virile and exudes self-confidence and self-esteem; in short, a formidable figure, and an important player.

ANGLE NARROWING until Greg is beside Joan and leans down toward her and kisses her. They are all alone now except for the two cars outside and the emptiness of the cleared sound stage on one side and the quiet studio street on the other.

GREG
You skated on that?

JOAN
What else could I do? He wants to dump me from the picture.

GREG
Who?

JOAN
Mayer.

GREG
I've already talked to Mayer. He'll wait. Three, four weeks if he has to.

Joan begins to well up with emotion at this news. Tears come to her eyes as she gazes up at Greg.

GREG
(continuing; tenderly)
How bad?

JOAN
It's not broken. It's twisted, ripped, something.

GREG
L. B. said he wishes his male stars had your balls.

JOAN
(smiling)
Is that anyway to talk in front of a lady?

GREG
He also said that if they did have your balls, MGM would be a lot richer.

(CONTINUED)

12A CONTINUED: (3)

JOAN
Then why do I get the bad scripts?

GREG
I didn't leave an important conference to come here and discuss your acting career.

Her emotional color changes like a chameleon. Now she's all tender, loving, touching, deeply moved.

JOAN
Come home with me.

GREG
I have to get back to my business.

JOAN
After?

GREG
After.

JOAN
What time?

GREG
When I get there.

JOAN
(reaching a hand out to him tenderly)
I'll be waiting.

He wheels her out into the street and the others come out to take her.

CUT TO:

13 EXT. MGM LOT - NIGHT 13

as Joan's limousine nears the main gate. Joan is in the back seat with her bandaged leg resting on a satin cushion in front of her on the jump seat. As the limo passes the gate, a cluster of fans (twelve to fifteen), several holding signs -- "We Love You, Joan," etc. -- are lined up along the drive, waving and calling to their idol. The limousine passes them.

CUT TO:

14 INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT 14

JOAN
Jim, stop.

JIM
Miss Crawford, you're hurt. I've got to get you home.

JOAN
Please stop. Those are my fans.

JIM backs the car up a few yards. Joan rolls down her window and fans press forward, several thrusting autograph books through the window. The famous Crawford smile as she begins to sign. One fan in particular is prominent in the window.

JOAN
(continuing; as she signs this fan's book)
Carol Ann, dear, not again. What do you do with these? Trade them?

A hush falls over the other fans as one of them has been singled out -- her name remembered.

CAROL ANN
(bewitched)
Miss Crawford, I would never do that. I save them. Every single autograph you ever gave me.

JOAN
That's lovely.

CAROL ANN
(summoning her courage)
We've heard about the accident and how brave and wonderful you were today.

JOAN
Thank you, Carol Ann.

CAROL ANN
If only we could help you. If I could...

JOAN
(softly)
That is so dear of you. So dear.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

She takes a long thoughtful moment, studying the woman.

JOAN
(continuing)
Jim. Please help Carol Ann into the front seat. I'd like her to come with me.

ON Carol Ann's astonished face, we...

CUT TO:

15 EXT. BRENTWOOD, NORTH OF SUNSET - DAY 15

CAMERA STARTS TIGHT ON the back of a dilapidated bus, which bears the banner: "Hollywood Wonderland Tours. See the Homes of the Stars."

As the bus works its way north on Bristol Avenue, CAMERA MOVES UP and INTO the interior to reveal fifteen or twenty tour customers, all dressed in their touristy 1939 best. They are spellbound as they listen to bored BUS DRIVER/cum tour guide.

DRIVER
And on our left, just ahead, the palatial home of movie queen Joan Crawford -- whose new movie Ice Follies of 1939 is currently playing in your own hometowns.

The bus moves in front of Joan's large white home surrounded by an ivy-covered six-foot fence. Tourists lean out the windows to get a better look as the bus inches along --

DRIVER
(continuing)
Miss Crawford was first married to movie star Douglas Fairbanks, Jr....

The bus has stopped and the passengers are all on one side trying to get a look into the private world of the Crawford estate.

DRIVER
(continuing)
... and is just recently divorced from her second husband, actor Franchot Tone.
(MORE)

15 CONTINUED: 15

DRIVER (CONT'D)
Miss Crawford has made over forty-eight films since coming to Hollywood in 1925 as a chorus girl, Lucille La Sewer...

A thin, middle-aged MAN, the true fan, corrects the Driver.

MAN
Pardon me, young man, that's Lucile Le... Sir.

DRIVER
Right, right...

He puts the bus in gear and starts to move on towards the next attraction. At the same time, and while his monologue continues, the CAMERA MOVES UP and AWAY from the bus and begins inexorably to move to the Crawford home.

16 EXT. CRAWFORD HOME 16

CAMERA CIRCLES the house to reveal the elaborate back yard, complete with a stunning swimming pool. On one side of the pool is a separate house for a projection room. On the other a matching building for dressing rooms/showers, etc.

Not hesitating an instant, the CAMERA MOVES past all this and OVER a lovely back terrace and INTO the house itself. Meanwhile, growing fainter, we continue to hear the DRIVER'S O.S. VOICE.

17 INT. LIVING ROOM 17

By now our disembodied CAMERA has gone past the elaborate Christmas wreath on the front door and invaded the living room and is CLOSING ON what appears to be the backside of an industrious cleaning woman who is hard at work scrubbing the black and white marble floor of the entrance hall. Now the last of the Bus Driver's SPIEL:

DRIVER (O.S.)
Joan Crawford is one of Hollywood's most popular stars.
(MORE)

17 CONTINUED: 17

DRIVER (CONT'D) (O.S.)
She is truly a queen of the silver screen. Her life is the epitome of glamour and elegance...

By this time, of course, CAMERA and we have discovered that the sweat-soaked cleaning lady is none other than the mistress of the house. She is in a pair of cotton work pants and she's working the soapy brush in a series of tight hard swirls. We get the feeling that the floor is already immaculate, but Miss Joan Crawford wants it cleaner!

After a beat, HELGA, the maid, appears, walking gingerly over the gleaming floor. Joan looks up.

JOAN
Yes?

HELGA
Finished in the dining room, Miss Crawford.

JOAN
(calls out as she gets to her feet)
Carol Ann!

CAMERA MOVES with Joan and Helga past the sparkling foyer into the dining room. Carol Ann joins them. This is an immense formal room. Quite Greek revival in feeling -- it was built to the specifications of the young Eastern aristocrat, Franchot Tone -- and it looks it.

JOAN
(continuing; inspecting)
Everything seems in order.

Joan crosses the dining room and goes to an enormous potted tree in the corner.

JOAN
(continuing)
Carol Ann, help me with this!

The two women struggle to move the tree which reveals a circle of unpolished wood where the tree tub stood. Joan turns to Helga who has been watching apprehensively.

17 CONTINUED: (2) 17

JOAN
(continuing)
When you polish the floor, you have to move the tree! If you don't appreciate this job, there are plenty of other maids who would love to work for Joan Crawford.
(turning to Carol Ann, sweetly)
You see, dear, you have to stay on top of things every single minute.

HELGA
I'm sorry I missed it, Miss Crawford. It won't happen again.

DOORBELL RINGS.

JOAN
(sighs)
I'll get it. Carol Ann, make sure she does it properly.

Joan crosses back through thehall to the front door. She pauses in front of a mirror and takes a moment to check her appearance and tuck in a wisp of hair. She opens the door to reveal Greg Savitt. He is impeccably dressed.

JOAN
(continuing; her brightest smile)
Greg, darling! You're early!

GREG
(charmingly)
Joan, my love, it is exactly eleven o'clock.

JOAN
Take off your shoes. I just cleaned that floor.

Still relaxed, Greg uses his foot to slip off his loafers, lining them up neatly.

GREG
(a half smile)
Should I take off my socks?

JOAN
I can handle the socks.

Heavy beat.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (3) 17

CAROL ANN
Come, Helga, we'll finish up in the kitchen.

GREG
That's what you're wearing?

JOAN
Come on up while I change.

She turns and goes up the stairs.

GREG
(muttering)
Oh, Christ.

18 He moves up the stunning curved staircase through the immense deco bedroom and into her even more elaborate dressing room. As he goes through these rooms, Greg, for no apparent reason, begins to undress. 18

CUT TO:

19 Joan in the shower. She has turned on water and is enjoying herself. 19

CUT TO:

Greg who has arrived in the bathroom in his undershorts.

GREG
(calling to Joan
in shower)
Getting late. Better move your ass, honey!

JOAN
(yelling out
over shower)
They'll wait.

GREG
I can't.

He opens shower door and gets in. He moves to embrace Joan. Both get soaking wet. Joan begins to laugh.

JOAN
(mock fighting
him off)
Greg, you're insane! Totally insane! Now get out of here. Go put the children's presents in the car. Or something.

19 CONTINUED: (4) 19

Wild horses couldn't get him out of the shower now.

GREG

Joan, like you said, they'll wait.

He reaches for her and they're off and running.

CUT TO:

20 EXT. CATHOLIC ORPHANAGE - DAY 20

The backyard of a classy orphans home. Joan is sitting on throne-like chair holding a two-year-old child on her lap as flashbulbs pop. Joan is radiant as Christmas gifts are handed to her which she gives to the various children. CAMERA CIRCLES to reveal lots of tiny tots and nuns lined up with a rosy MOTHER SUPERIOR smiling beatifically at the proceedings. Greg, like a prime minister, is slightly to the rear of her majesty.

In the foreground, hard at work, a group of photographers and a Movietone Newsreel cameraman along with a couple of studio publicists and flunkies.

In single file, by size and age, is the lineup of orphans; each one breathlessly awaiting their turn for the imperial blessing. As Joan helps a three-year-old boy open his gift, the Mother Superior moves forward.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

(smiling for the camera -- she's no slouch either)

Miss Crawford, words cannot express our gratitude for the happiness you bring our children.

Joan's eyes are moist. Graciously, she helps one child off her lap and reaches for the next.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED: 20

JOAN

I'm the one who's grateful. Being here with you and the children is one of the things I most look forward to every Christmas.

As the new orphan settles into place and flashbulbs pop, Joan is looking with intensity and feeling at the child's guileless face.

CUT TO:

21 EXT. ESCONDIDO BEACH - DAY 21

A lovely deserted strand of beach, a spindly pier in the middle distance and in the b.g. the cliffs and rocks of Point Dume. Greg and Joan walk along the beach. They're enjoying the solitude and each other's company. Both are barefoot and dressed informally. After a few moments deep in thought, Joan speaks quietly.

JOAN

You know what's missing in my life?

GREG

A hit movie.

JOAN

You bastard.

GREG

Come on, you've got everything you want.

JOAN

No I don't. I want a baby.

Greg stops. Lifts an eyebrow and looks at her quizzically.

GREG

A baby?

JOAN

You know I've always wanted a kid...

GREG

You're too vain to be pregnant.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: 21

JOAN
Vain? Do you know how many miscarriages I had with Franchot? Seven. Goddamnit, I tried. I'm going to adopt one.

GREG
Out of the question.

JOAN
What's that mean?

GREG
It means no agency would give you a baby.

JOAN
How do you know?

GREG
I'm a lawyer.

JOAN
Bend the law.

GREG
Bend the law! You're an actress, you've been divorced twice. Adoption agencies are brutal.
(softening a bit)
Besides... a baby needs a father.

JOAN
(a flash of temper)
A father? A father? I grew up without a father. I grew up with a mother who changed husbands like you change bedsheets. I'll make a perfect home for my baby.

GREG
Maybe you could. One thing's certain: you'd sure get a lot of publicity.

JOAN
You miserable bastard. All anyone in Hollywood can ever think of is publicity, box office, movies, scripts. Why don't any of you ever try to understand a woman?

CUT TO:

22 INT. ADOPTION AGENCY - LOS ANGELES - DAY 22

CLOSE ON A BABY sleeping in crib. Joan's hands gently reach for the baby. Joan lifts baby out of crib, holding the child in her arms. Next to Joan stands a young NURSE who watches Joan with awe. Joan holds the baby, smiling and whispering.

JOAN
You dear, dear thing... look at her hands... so perfect... and tiny... Let me see, now... what would be a good name for you? I'd like to call you Joan, Jr., but they don't do that with girls do they?

BETH SIMPSON enters. She is a social worker with the adoption agency. She is about 45, conscientious and smart. She crosses immediately to the Nurse.

BETH
Everybody waits in the waiting room.
(pointedly)
Everybody, Miss Crawford.
(to the nurse)
And you should know better.

JOAN
(all her charm)
Mrs. Simpson, it's not her fault. It's my fault.

CUT TO:

23 INT. SIMPSON OFFICE - DAY 23

A wooden desk, three chairs and a file cabinet. The desk is neat, but there are piles of folders at one end. Joan enters first, Beth follows. Beth smiles pleasantly, retaining a businesslike manner as she sits in her chair. Joan takes the chair nearest her. Beth takes the top folder off stack, opening it and setting it on the desk in front of her.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

BETH
(studying contents
of folder)
I have some difficult news for you, Miss Crawford.
(sympathetically)
The agency has denied your application for adoption.

JOAN
(shocked)
How could they?

BETH
I understand your disappointment.

JOAN
(interrupting)
Why would they?

BETH
(picking up folder)
Well, you live alone, and there are no other family members in the home. You have two previous divorces. You're a busy active woman. The candidate is recommended as unsuitable.

Joan is up, grabbing the folder, staring at it, not reading.

BETH
(continuing, reaches
for the folder)
Miss Crawford!

JOAN
How dare you?

She throws folder at Beth.

BETH
Please...

JOAN
(leaning over the desk
and exploding)
Who the hell do you think you're talking to?! You can't judge me!

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: (2) 23

BETH
(tough right back)
We have a moral and legal responsibility in this job!

JOAN
To whom!?! Obviously you don't understand. What you're really doing is denying one of your orphans the opportunity to have a wonderful and advantaged life. How sad that is! Good afternoon.

Joan exits.

CUT TO:

24 INT. LIVING ROOM/BAR AREA OF THE BRENTWOOD HOUSE - DAY 24

Joan, dressed to the teeth, smoking furiously. Greg, amused, sits casually in a chair watching her. Joan continuously stops at various mirrors and checks her appearance.

JOAN
Do I look alright? Am I dressed alright?

GREG
Oh, for Christ sakes.

JOAN
I want to be perfect.

GREG
The kid is two months old. It's not going to know.

JOAN
I know. Why aren't they here?

Greg is fixing a drink. She smashes her cigarette out.

JOAN
(continuing)
Please don't drink. I don't want whiskey on your breath.

GREG
(suddenly angry)
Goddamn it, Joan. I got you the baby. It's yours. You have it.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED: 24

JOAN
(as suddenly tender)
I know... I know...

DOORBELL RINGS.

JOAN
(continuing)
They're here.

As Greg and Joan move through the living room, CAROL ANN opens the front door to reveal a DOCTOR and NURSE. The Nurse is carrying the infant, CHRISTINA. Greg and Doctor stand back. Joan is frozen in her steps. As always, a master performer, she plays the moment to the hilt.

JOAN
(continuing; a long, slow intake of breath)
She's beautiful. She's so beautiful...

Reverentially, she slowly approaches the infant. Gently, delicately takes her from the Nurse's arms as though the tiny bundle was in fact the holy grail.

JOAN
(continuing; clasping the infant to her breast)
Oh, Greg, how beautiful she is.
How beautiful...
(and she begins to weep)
My child, my own daughter.

Greg, moved and embarrassed, goes to Joan and gently touches her.

25 INT. NURSERY - TINA - TWO MONTHS OLD - DAY 25

It is wildly over-decorated, precisely what you would expect. Metro's art department really did their job on this one.

Greg enters room, stops in the doorway admiring the new mother holding her child and overhears:

JOAN
(crooning to the infant in her arms)
My beautiful little baby.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: 25

JOAN (CONT'D)
I'm going to give you all the things I never had. I'm going to make a perfect life for me and my little darling.

Aware of Greg's presence in the doorway, she turns to him.

Greg moves to Joan and speaks softly to Christina.

GREG
You're a lucky little girl. And very expensive. You cost me a lot of favors.

Joan is hugging the baby tight, almost too tight. She steps away. She slowly starts to turn. When she speaks at last it is very soft and we have to strain to hear her.

JOAN
(creating her own new world)
I'm going to call her Christina... Christina Crawford. My darling daughter... My own Christina Crawford...

26 thru 30 OMITTED 26 thru 30

31 EXT. BACK YARD - BRENTWOOD HOUSE - TINA - SEVEN YEARS OLD - CLOSE SHOT - DAY 31

A spinning mini-carousel, loaded with laughing children. As the faces whirl past, there are Joan and her daughter, Tina, dressed in identical gingham dresses and pinafores. Each time Joan and Tina pass, the cameras click, as the ANGLE WIDENS to disclose:

Christina's seventh birthday party extravaganza underway. There is a pony ride, the HANDLER dressed in a hobo costume as he leads CHILDREN around on two Shetland ponies. A CLOWN is surrounded by half a dozen children as he juggles and balances things on his big red nose. THREE PHOTOGRAPHERS take pictures.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: 31

Among the guests are a dozen or so perfectly turned out Hollywood youngsters, along with assorted MOTHERS. We also see, prominent in their awkward discomfort, several ENLISTED MEN in the Armed Services. They've clearly been invited as window dressing and are thoroughly out of place. Several should be decorated with combat medals... others are fresh from boot camp.

MED. SHOT, CAMERA ON CAROUSEL, whirling around, as Joan embraces her laughing daughter.

JOAN
Are you haveing a happy birthday,
Tina darling...

TINA
This is the best party I ever had.
I love you, Mommie!

LONG SHOT LOW ANGLE SHOOTING TO CAROUSEL, as the photographers snap away, and Joan steps lightly off to join the watchers. Among them Carol Ann, holding little CHRISTOPHER and a group of worshipful G.I.s Joan takes Christopher, her second adopted child who is an angelic looking one-year-old. She is smiling happily as she poses for the photographers while chatting with the enlisted men.

JOAN
This is Christopher, my second
child. I *would adopt every unwanted*
child in the world. No one should
be unwanted. Heaven knows, life
is difficult enough when you are
wanted.

The carousel halts. Laughing, happy, euphoric, Christina alights and runs to join a group of her friends by the side of the pool.

CUT TO:

32 LONG SHOT - FAVORING JOAN 32

A look of concern crosses her face as Christina draws close to the edge of the pool. Joan hands the baby, Christopher, to Carol Ann.

JOAN
Time for Christopher's nap. Ask
Nanny to tuck him in properly.

(CONTINUED)

Not missing a beat and with a radiant smile for the photographers who are still snapping away, she calls to Christina.

JOAN
(continuing)
Christina! Christina, darling, not too near the edge!

Christina smiles and begins to run towards her mother, as photographers snap away. Christina flings herself into Joan's waiting arms...

Big hug to Joan, photographers scramble to get into position and capture the moment. Joan repositions Christina in the hug so their faces are cheated toward the camera -- both mother and daughter locked in frozen smiles.

A second photographer comes towards them. Christina follows him with her eyes but holds the mother/daughter pose, maintaining her wide smile. They continue to freeze until he gets his shot.

JIMMY
(MGM photographer)
Could we get some of you and Chrstina in the rose garden, Miss Crawford?

Joan stands up, is about to say yes, but Christina interrupts.

CHRISTINA
(she looks down at her pinafore)
I've got a spot!

JOAN
(glances at the child's dress)
That won't show, Christina.

CHRISTINA
I'll just run upstairs and have Nanny take care of it.

JOAN
No, you'll stay down here because Jimmy's ready.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED: (2) 32

JIMMY
Actually, Miss Crawford -- it
might read...

Christina looks angelically up at her mother, savoring her victory.

JOAN
(not batting an
eyelash)
Perhaps you're right, Jimmy.
(a smile to
Christina)
Run along. Have Nanny see to it.
We'll be in the rose garden.

CUT TO:

33 OMITTED 33

34 EXT. ROSE GARDEN - DAY 34

The birthday celebration continues in the background while Joan and Christina are frozen in position in the rose garden. Christina is holding a straw basket and looking up at Joan, who is reaching out to cut a rose with clippers. They are wearing sunbonnets that match their dresses. Jimmy, the photographer, snaps pictures, talking as he shoots.

JIMMY
Good, that's great. Reach for a
high flower, Christina -- and look
at Mommie.

The photographer gets down in a crouching position and focuses on Christina, who turns towards him with a winning smile. He clicks off several shots.

JIMMY
(continuing; to Joan)
That's great. She's fabulous, a
real natural.

ANGLE ON JOAN

who is holding the straw basket, realizes she is no longer the center of attention. Joan breaks her pose.

34 CONTINUED: 34

The enthusiastic photographer is now snapping solo pictures of Christina who is hamming it up like a little pro.

JOAN
(smiling)
That's enough, Christina. Run along and play with your little friends, darling.
(as Christina runs off, Joan turns to Jimmy)
After all she's only a child, Jimmy. Let her enjoy her birthday.

JIMMY
The studio said they'd like some good stuff when she blows out the candles.

JOAN
(almost to herself, as she watches Christina run off)
Yes. Of course.

CUT TO:

35 INT. CHRISTINA'S ROOM - NIGHT 35

The room has been redone; now it's every young girl's dream, dominated by a pink four-poster bed. Christopher's crib is against the wall. Christina is sitting on her bed with unwrapped presents surrounding her. Christina has a particularly large doll which she holds on her lap.

CHRISTINA
She's so beautiful! What should I name her?

Joan is lifting Christopher out of his crib.

JOAN
(turning to Christina while holding Christopher)
You like her best?

CHRISTINA
Oh, yes.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED: 35

JOAN
Then that's the present you can keep.
The rest we'll take to the poor
children who don't have anything.
And tomorrow we'll do our thank you
notes.

Christina's face falls. She glances longingly at her other gifts.

JOAN
(continuing)
You may pick one for Christopher,
though.

Greg appears in doorway holding his present for Christina. Christina quickly unwraps the small box. It is a beautiful gold charm bracelet.

GREG
Happy birthday, darling.

CHRISTINA
Oh, Uncle Greg. Just what I wanted!
I love it.
(a reluctant smile)
But you see I'm keeping only one
present. All the rest I'm going
to give to the poor orphans who
don't have anything.

Christina looks to Joan for approval. Joan crosses, sits with Christina on the bed with Christopher in her arms. They are surrounded by presents and wrapping paper.

GREG
I've already read that in the
papers. And it's wonderful.
(he gently takes
back the bracelet)
So I'll keep it for you until you
don't have to choose.

He plays with it, and lets Joan have one of his ironic smiles.

GREG
(continuing)
I thought a long time about this
before I picked it for you.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED: (2) 35

With infinite sweetness Joan puts an arm around her daughter. Joan is touched, or at least does the scene.

JOAN
This time we'll just make an exception. You can keep the bracelet and the doll.

CHRISTINA
Oh! Mommie, dearest!

Greg with complete ease, puts the bracelet on Christina's wrist, kisses her and Joan.

JOAN
Now. Remember what I told you about adopted children?

CHRISTINA
Adopted-children-are-luckiest-'cause-they-were-chosen.

JOAN
Right, darling. Shall we sing our song for Uncle Greg?

And Joan begins to sing an old lullaby. Christina joins in when she remembers the words.

JOAN/CHRISTINA
'When at night I go to sleep,
Fourteen angels guard my sleep...'

Greg Savittt watches as they go on with the old song.

CUT TO:

35A EXT. BRENTWOOD HOUSE POOL AREA - FULL SHOT - DAY 35A

The remains of lunch at a table set up near the pool. Greg and Joan are at the table, both watching Tina who is at the pool, getting ready to dive. On the grass nearby, Carol Ann plays with little Chris who is harnessed and controlled by a long rein. Joan is wearing a short white terry cloth robe, a swim suit, her fabulous legs and ankle strap sandals. Greg is in street clothes, his jacket nearby, his collar open and tie loose. The air is relaxed except for Tina.

35B REVERSE ANGLE - FAVORING TINA 35

Christina is perched on the edge of the pool, her arms out behind her, bent over in preparation to dive. She looks tired and water-logged. She's waiting for her mother's orders.

JOAN
(calling out)
You keep arching your back! You mustn't do that! Okay, one, two, three, dive!

CHRISTINA
(whining)
But I'm tired, Mommie.

JOAN
Quitter!

Christina returns to take her diving position at the edge.

JOAN
(continuing)
Good. Now. One, two, three, dive!

And Tina does.

JOAN
(continuing)
Better.

GREG
She's only a kid.

Joan gives a derisive snort.

JOAN
So was I. Only a kid -- and I learned early -- you grow up too goddamned fast. You gotta know how to compete and win. I don't want her growing up a spoiled Hollywood brat -- just because she's Crawford's daughter!

She leans back, smiles at Greg, for the moment content. She takes a deep breath.

JOAN
(continuing;
looking around)
Lovely, isn't it?

(CONTINUED)

35B CONTINUED:

GREG
Oh, yes... It's been a great Sunday, at home, with a star.

Joan looks around at the restful scene, the sun bright, little Chris laughing, Tina climbing out of the pool.

JOAN
I hardly ever have nice days like this.

GREG
(looks at watch)
I've got an appointment.

JOAN
They call. You run.

He was about to get up, to lean over and kiss her, but now he just sits down again, easily, leans quietly over the table and looks steadily at her.

GREG
Who calls and I run?

She is suddenly full of conciliation, the words which she may have felt, simply escaped. She leans over and touches his hands. He doesn't resist, he simply ignores her gesture.

JOAN
You're here, you're not here. You're in my life, you're not in my life. It drives me crazy. I don't want you to go.

GREG
Then act that way. Who calls and I run?

JOAN
Nobody.

GREG
Then why do you say that?

JOAN
Because I'm damned mad with you.

GREG
Why?

35B CONTINUED: (2) 35B

*

*

JOAN
(holding script)
This is the best script the studio has and it hasn't been offered to me.... You could help me.

GREG
Joan, that's Mayer's business. I never tell a man I respect how to run his business.

*

*

JOAN
(passionately)
But I want it. I need a good part. My fans need a big hit from me and this picture's going to be a hit.

GREG
How do you know?

*

*

JOAN
My God, I'm an actress. You've got to help, Greg.

GREG
I'm not your agent. I'm your lover. So don't ask me as a favor to be your agent. You want that script, get it. You're an alley cat. Fight.

JOAN
I have fought.

GREG
Fight harder.

JOAN
They think I'm slipping.

GREG
Are you?

JOAN
No.

GREG
So.

JOAN
Yes.

* 35B CONTINUED: (3) 35B

GREG
Fight harder, or give up but don't attack someone who cares for you.

JOAN
I just want that picture.

GREG
Relax, Joan. L. B. told me he wishes his male stars had your balls.

JOAN
(smiling)
Is that anyway to talk in front of a lady?

GREG
He also said that if they did have your balls, MGM would be a lot richer.

JOAN
I just want that script.
(a beat)
I want you, too.

GREG
You have me.

He walks off and she watches as Christina runs to him, dripping wet. He laughs, kisses her cautiously, and the child waves as Greg leaves.

GREG
(continuing)
Have a good time, Tina.

CHRISTINA
Thanks, Uncle Greg. I love you.

JOAN
Now who wants to go swimming?

CHRISTINA
I do!

JOAN
I'll race you!

(CONTINUED)

35C EXT. POOL AREA - IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING 35C

Joan and Christina are side by side in the water, holding onto the pool's edge with one hand and staring fixedly across at the other end. Christina is totally concentrated. Carol Ann stands at the far end of the pool.

CAROL ANN
On your marks, get set, go!

Christina pushes off furiously. Joan is smiling.

(CONTINUED)

35C CONTINUED: 35C

We assume she is letting her daughter get a head start so she can win. But when Joan pushes off, her expression is as determined as the child's. Joan is a strong swimmer and quickly reaches Christina and plows right on past her, traversing the pool's length in a dozen powerful strokes. Christina reaches the edge, pulls her head out of the water and looks crestfallen when she sees her mother is already there, wearing a winner's smile. Christina looks hurt, and slightly puzzled. Joan looks at her, apparently oblivious to the child's feelings.

JOAN
Again? I'll give you a bigger
head start.

Christina nods and her expression brightens. She assumes that she will win this time, that her mother was just teasing. Carol Ann moves back to the shallow end of the pool.

CAROL ANN
On your marks, get set, go!

Christina pushes off. Joan gives her the bigger head start she promised -- but then pushes off and using every ounce of her strength, she swims full speed towards the other end. Christina is swamped by the wake of waves her mother leaves behind.

Christina gamely storms to the finish. Joan has pulled herself up and is triumphantly waiting for her daughter.

JOAN
You lost again!

Christina, gasping for breath, pulls herself up on the coping and furiously goes to her mother. Her young body is shaking with anger.

CHRISTINA
That's not fair! You're bigger
than I am. It's not fair to win
twice!

JOAN
Nobody ever said life was fair,
Christina. I'm bigger and faster,
I can always beat you!

CHRISTINA
(angry as hell)
Well. Then I'm not going to play
with you any more. Ever!

(CONTINUED)

35C CONTINUED: (2) 35C

Joan is furious.

JOAN
Don't you ever use that tone of voice with me, Miss! Who do you think you're talking to? I'll tell you what you're going to do. You're going to march yourself to your room and stay in there until I tell you to come out.

CHRISTINA
(as strong as Joan)
No! I won't!

Joan grabs Christina, spins her around and slaps her on her rear end four times as hard as she can. Christina is fighting tears.

CHRISTINA
(continuing)
I won't go! I won't go! I won't go!

Joan picks her up and bodily marches her toward a cabana, opens the door and flings the child inside.

JOAN
You can stay in here until you're ready to behave and to apologize!

She slams the door.

CUT TO:

36 INT. JOAN'S BEDROOM - DAWN 36

The room is dark. It is five a.m. and there are the isolated SOUNDS of a couple of BIRDS CHIRPING outside, where the sun has yet to come up. The ALARM RINGS and Joan shuts it off and turns on the bedside lamp. She lies there for another minute. Black eyeshades. An elastic chin strap circling her neck. A band holding her hair back from her face, which is covered with greasy cream. White cotton gloves that have the same cream inside. She looks like a refugee from a medieval torture chamber.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: 36

She takes off the eyeshade and cringes at the light. She gets up slowly, every bone of her body feeling that it is inhumanly early.

CUT TO:

37 INT. JOAN'S DRESSING ROOM/BATH - DAWN 37

In a brief reprise of the opening title sequence, Joan leans over a sink full of steaming hot water, her face lathered with sudsy cleansing cream. She splashes her face with the hot water. She dabs at her face with a towel, then pours coffee from the percolator. She breathes in the steamy aroma of the coffee with a grateful smile. She takes a sip, shuts her eyes in pleasure, sips again. Then with a sigh she opens the ice bucket on the counter and dumps ice into the big empty bowl beside it.

Sighing, Joan moves closer to the mirror. She puts her fingers to the outside corners of her eyes and stretches the skin back, in the classic gesture of a woman seeing signs of the ravages of approaching middle age. Her self-scrutiny is merciless. After several long BEATS of this, we...

CUT TO:

38 INT. DRESSING ROOM - LATER 38

Coffee mug in hand, Joan stands in front of an open closet door where there are a dozen exercise suits hanging in a row. She stands for a moment in front of them, unable to decide which color to wear. She bends over, her body still not fully awake, and picks out a pair of tennis shoes from the row beneath the suits. She grabs a red sweat suit and starts into the bedroom, her nose nuzzled inside her coffee mug.

CUT TO:

39 EXT. STREET IN BRENTWOOD - EARLY MORNING 39

The sun is barely illuminating a lushly green, tree-lined street. A LONG SHOT of the peaceful street, with sleeping houses on either side. Elaborate landscaping fronts every house. A light fog hangs low to the ground.

The nose of Joan's Cadillac convertible appears through the fog at the far end of the street. The CAMERA MOVES TOWARDS the car.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED: 39

As the car and the CAMERA COME CLOSER we recognize Crawford doing vigorous roadwork keeping pace with her car and driver.

The CAMERA ANGLE CHANGES TO A TWO SHOT of Joan and the driver, Carol Ann. They talk as she continues to run.

JOAN
(drenched with sweat)
This five a.m. crap sure doesn't get any easier.

CAROL ANN
Your fans should know the price you pay.

JOAN
What good is it when Mayer keeps sticking me in losers?

She gets angrier, runs faster, gets louder.

JOAN
(continuing)
I'm the biggest female star that bastard's ever had and he's burying me alive...

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

39A EXT. BRENTWOOD HOUSE - PANNING SHOT - DAY 39A

The Cadillac drives in and Joan trots ahead of it, through the driveway to the rear of the house, through a gate, and into the kitchen.

39B INT. BREAKFAST AREA - FULL SHOT 39B

Joan arrives sweating, exhausted. Helga hands her a towel which she wraps around her shoulders and head while she drinks a tall glass of orange juice. A glance at the kitchen clock: 7:25. Christopher is having breakfast, seated in a modified high chair.

JOAN
Where's Tina?

HELGA
She'll be down in a minute, Miss Crawford.

(CONTINUED)

39B CONTINUED:

JOAN
(kissing Christopher
on head)
Eat everything, darling.

Carol Ann comes in from the outside. Joan starts to leave.

JOAN
(continuing; aching)
God. My muscles.

The TELEPHONE RINGS, but Joan leaves as Carol Ann answers.

CAROL ANN
Hello. Oh... Yes, sir...
(calling)
Miss Crawford.

Joan shows her towelled head back in the room.

JOAN
What, who, at this time?

CAROL ANN
It's Mr. Savitt.

Joan is quickly at the phone. *There is a terrible sense of dread as she looks at Carol Ann, before she suddenly changes herself and says with joy:*

JOAN
Greg, dear.

GREG (V.O.)
Hello, Joan.

JOAN
Something wrong?

GREG (V.O.)
Why?

JOAN
It's so early.

GREG (V.O.)
I've talked to you earlier.

JOAN
In bed. Not on the telephone.
What is it? You all right?

GREG (V.O.)
Checking to see if you're on time in your training schedule. You in shape?

JOAN
For bad news, no. Is it me or you? Where are you.

GREG (V.O.)
We had a sudden little *labor* problem so we had a sudden little early meeting. By the way, Mayer thinks you'd be terrific in the picture you wanted.

A jet charge of exhilaration erupts in Joan. It transforms her into youth again, into strength, vitality, exclamation.

JOAN
Greg!

GREG (V.O.)
Tried to talk him out of it, but I couldn't. 'Bye.

And the PHONE GOES DEAD.

JOAN
Greg! Greg!

She turns and grabs Carol Ann, and wheels her around.

JOAN
(continuing; crying out wildly)
I have it. I have it.

She lets go and dances around wheeling, leaping, and they follow her into the foyer and to the stairs.

39C INT. STAIRWELL - LOW ANGLE PANNING SHOT 39C

The women watch Joan taking the stairs two at a time. At the top, she executes two wild tap kicks in air and is gone down the hallway.

39D INT. HALLWAY - MOVING SHOT 39D

Joan opens Christina's door.

39D CONTINUED: 39D

JOAN
Tina, Tina... Darling. Great news.

But the room is empty.

CUT TO:

40 INT. JOAN'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY (7:30 A.M.) 40

Christina is dressed for school. She is seated at Joan's elaborate vanity table, brushing her hair, doing a devastatingly accurate parody of her mother, posing and smiling.

CHRISTINA
'Oh, yes... it was thrilling... I'm so very grateful to all of you who made me a star...'

She holds her hairbrush, admiring it like an award. She smiles adoringly at her public then looks at herself in the mirror.

CLOSE SHOT - JOAN IN HALLWAY

absorbing this scene which like a violent acid, dissolves her triumph into defeat and frustrated fury. She moves OUT OF FRAME.

FULL SHOT - CHRISTINA AT MIRROR

Suddenly Joan appears in the mirror behind Christina. Christina, startled, whirls around to see Joan, standing directly behind her.

JOAN
What are you doing?

CHRISTINA
Mommie!

JOAN
And who do you think you are?

CHRISTINA
Nobody, Mommie... I was... just... playing.

JOAN
Why do you insist on spending so much time in front of the mirror... Why?

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED: 40

Terrified, Christina mumbles something.

JOAN
(screaming)
Answer me!

CHRISTINA
(desperately)
Because you do.

Out of the buried rage of every soul, a flame of death leaps free in Joan. Wildly, *she opens a drawer and* grabs a pair of scissors.

CHRISTINA
(continuing; absolute terror)
Don't.

JOAN
You're vain and spoiled...
(she grabs Christina's hair)
You refuse to listen or obey...

Joan begins to hack at Christina's hair.

CHRISTINA
(weeping)
No, Mommie... please...

Joan cuts methodically. Hair falls to the floor in clumps.

CHRISTINA
(continuing)
I'll never do it again. I promise ... I promise.

JOAN
(to herself as she cuts away)
Spoiled. I've let you spoil.

Joan continues to chop as we...

CUT TO:

OMIT SCENE 41

41A EXT. CHASEN'S RESTAURANT - HIGH ANGLE LONG SHOT - NIGHT 41A

Except for a narrow corridor of people through which arriving dinner patrons can get in, the sidewalk's alive with a loose crowd of fans, waiting for stars. These fans converge on each arrival, and then come apart again when it's a Nobody. This happens once or twice, but the third time, the loose molecules converge into a solid mass of noise and excitement.

41B TIGHT MOVING SHOT 41B

Of first, Greg, and then Joan getting out of the limousine. The fans are wild. They call her name. Neither valet nor Greg can protect her and, in fact, as she slowly makes her way through, she is turning on her smile, her welcome, her love of fans for all to see. She signs her name. She shakes hands. When Greg sees this, he just drifts into the crowd, CAMERA MOVING WITH HIM. At entrance to Chasen's, the door is opened for him, and he takes a look back.

41C FULL SHOT - FAVORING JOAN 41C

her face in a sea of faces, no bodies, just faces and hands.

JOAN
(happy in her
universe)
Thanks, thank you, everybody.
You're all so dear to me. I
love all of you.

41D CLOSE MOVING SHOT 41D

Greg makes a face and disappears within.

41E CLOSE MOVING SHOT 41E

Joan with great skill is signing, laughing, and saying goodbye, all the while heading for the entry, where three valets, two waiters are making room for her, and she in effect stays with them as she leaves them, with the whole art of someone who has done this for over twenty years.

JOAN
Goodnight, goodnight. And thank
you, thank you.

She's in.

42 INT. CHASEN'S - FULL SHOT 42

Joan is there, royally present and then DAVID CHASEN ENTERS THE FRAME, ANGLE NARROWING. He is ready to escort her to her special table.

CHASEN
Miss Crawford, welcome, good evening. We're ready for you. Please.

REVERSE LONG SHOT

She stands and looks around. Her table is empty except for two waiters standing by. CAMERA PANS, table after table. Some Hollywood personalities wave to her, others who don't actually know her, just smile in appreciation of the privilege of being in the same restaurant with Joan Crawford.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT

Joan takes a slow step forward, but she scans the place through her ever-present friendly smile, and then sees Greg.

TIGHT GROUP SHOT

At a middle table of the main aisle, Greg is seated with L.B. MAYER, and two other middle-aged MEN, impeccably Eastern in dress and attitude. They are all attention to each other. No one has looked up to see her.

FULL SHOT

Joan waiting as the help wait for her next move.

FULL SHOT AT MAYER TABLE

No one is thinking of Joan, that's clear.

TIGHT SHOT - FAVORING JOAN

Chasen a step behind her. She is growing angrier with each passing second. Her smile becomes more and more fixed and vacant but never falters. A signal from Chasen.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED: 42

REVERSE PANNING SHOT

The CAMERA SWEEPS PAST table after table until it STOPS at Mayer's where an alerted waiter leans respectfully over to whisper something to Greg. They all turn as one and look INTO CAMERA. Greg excuses himself. CAMERA MOVES WITH HIM PAST table after table, until Joan is there.

GREG

Did your fans let go of you at last? We were about to send a rescue squad.

LONG SHOT from Mayer's table as they all stand up as Greg arrives with Joan. ANGLE NARROWS.

JOAN

This is a happy surprise, L.B.

Mayer kisses and introduces the strangers.

MAYER

Joanie, I want you to meet a few financial friends from New York. They're bankers. Miss Crawford, Mr. Lubin, Mr. Dodd.

After some polite murmurs, Dodd takes a menu and smiles at Joan apologetically.

DODD

My daughter, Ellen, would love to have your signature Miss Crawford.

JOAN

I'm so happy to meet all of you. May I have a pen, please?

MAYER

You see, Joan, she didn't want L.B. Mayer's signature.

[redacted]

The banker hands her a gold pen. As Joan signs the menu, she offers the banker a smile.

JOAN

She's not as smart as her father.

Now she turns her dazzling smile to L. B. and drops her eyes seductively.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED: 42

JOAN
(continued)
She doesn't realize you're the king.

She makes a move to leave, but Greg doesn't move, and so for a moment it all hangs there, unbalanced. But Mayer knows what he wants.

MAYER
Where you going? We're having dinner, join us. You're one of the reasons bankers love Metro.

The bankers say their please Miss Crawford. Joan offers Greg a quick malevolent look and then turns back to the others knowing she's lost the battle. She smiles graciously and moves to sit at the booth.

L. B. looks up with a gracious smile of victory.

L. B. MAYER
(sweetly)
You're aces, Joan.

Joan smiles back just as sweetly.

JOAN
And aces beat kings?

Mayer smiles back even more sweetly.

L. B. MAYER
Not in Hollywood, dear.
(not missing a beat, turns to the two bankers)
I'm sure you'll be satisfied with the interest arrangements. We'll all meet in New York......

ANGLE NARROWS to a tight two shot of Joan and Greg. If looks could kill, Greg is long gone.

CUT TO:

43 OMMITTED 43

44 INT. JOAN'S BEDROOM SUITE, BRENTWOOD HOUSE - LONG SHOT - LOW ANGLE - FAVORING GREG 44

He's jacketless, his tie open, slouched in an elegant chair watching Joan still in her fancy clothes. She's pouring herself a fresh vodka.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED: 44

JOAN
Hauling me off to Mayer's table like some picked-up floozie... or one of those little starlets out to give the big shots a nice night in town....

Joan turns drink in hand, glaring at Greg.

JOAN
(continuing)
Is that the way you think of me?

GREG
How many drinks is that? When you were a kid that made you look sexy. Now it just makes you look drunk.

Joan hurls the drink at him.

GREG
You'll do that once too often!

Greg takes out his handkerchief and mops his face.

JOAN
Damnit, Chasen's is my place!

GREG
Nobody wanted my signature, so I walked in.

JOAN
You expect me to turn away my fans? They're life and death to me!

GREG
(sits up now)
I expect you to walk in with me, sit down at your table with me. Then Mayer would have to bring his bankers over, introduce them, get your autograph and leave. That's what you should have done.

JOAN
Maybe that's what I would have done if you weren't so busy kissing L. B.'s ass.

GREG
Why are you screaming?

44 CONTINUED: 44

JOAN
How could you put him *over me?*
You know that man is trying to
destroy my career.

GREG
He's not destroying your career,
Joan. If your career's in trouble
it has nothing to do with him.

JOAN
I can't get a good script from
that bastard.

GREG
He's given you everything you've
asked for. It's not the scripts,
Joan.

JOAN
Then what is it?

GREG
Joan, the last FILM you begged
for... and got... that part should
have been played by a younger girl.

JOAN
(deadly)
What are you talking about?

GREG
(as gentle as he
can be -- because
he's telling the
truth)
You're *destroying your own career.*
You were always the shop girl who
fought her way to the top and made
a great success. Well, you're not
a little shop girl anymore. And
that's the truth to face and deal
with if you want to survive. The
truth is... you're getting old.

JOAN
(full out)
And you're nothing but a crooked
lawyer, with connections you'd be
afraid to name, supplying the
grease that makes this shitty
movie system work. That's what
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

JOAN CONT'D

you are. You think your life's a mystery? There isn't a dirty cover up in this industry that I don't know about, and your hand is in every bit of it. You stink of it.

Powerful, he jumps half across the room and has her in his hands, ready to break her.

GREG

No sane person would dare talk to me that way. No one anywhere.

(shaking her)

Are you crazy?

She is scared beyond resistance. She wilts.

GREG

(continuing; yelling)

Are you crazy? Are you crazy? Tell me!

JOAN

I'm crazy.

He is suddenly ice cold again, and lets go of her. She collapses on the floor, and half lies there while he ties his tie and puts on his jacket.

GREG

Get up. There's no camera here.

JOAN

Greg, where are you going?

GREG

Where I belong. Out of here.

She is up, ready to fight, to tear him apart, then suddenly changes, moves to her bed, lies down on it, her head against the pillows, her voice, her bearing, every movement, sensuous and welcoming.

JOAN

Why? You belong here. And I'm waiting for you.

He is at the door and her voice enfolds him there, wrapping itself around him, pulling him back, soft, wanting.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED: 44

JOAN
(continuing)
I am, Greg.

GREG
(takes a look)
Goodnight, Joan.

The door opens.

JOAN
(tenderly)
Darling, please, don't leave.
Because if you do...

She is up out of the bed like a wildcat, screaming and raging.

JOAN
(continuing)
If you do, you'll never never
come back in again, no matter what
you say and what you ask and what
you do. I mean never. And I never
change my mind. And I never forget.
Never.

He waits until the last sound dies out.

GREG
(reasonably)
I wish you well, Joan. I'll only
speak well of you.

JOAN
(suddenly frail
and helpless)
Greg, please. Don't leave me
this way. Please.

GREG
If you're acting, you're wasting
your time. If you're not, you're
wasting mine.

JOAN
(bellowing)
I AM NOT ACTING!

GREG
Goodnight. Good luck. Goodbye.

Softly, he closes the door behind him. CAMERA moves in slowly on Joan's rigid back.

45 OMITTED 45

46 INT. CHILDREN'S ROOM - LONG SHOT - FAVORING CHRISTINA AND CHRISTOPHER 46

watching through their half open door, listening. They see Greg in the hallway and as he goes downstairs.

REVERSE LONG SHOT FAVORING Greg who takes a look back and sees the tiny children. He shakes his head and leaves.

INT. CHILDREN'S BEDROOM - CLOSE SHOT

The forlorn faces of the children, as ANGLE WIDENS.

Inside Joan's room something *CRASHES. The children* scurry for safety. Christina straps Christopher in his bed and then she jumps into her own and they are still.

CUT TO:

47 OMITTED 47

* 48 INT. UPSTAIRS LANDING OF MAIN STAIRCASE - EARLY MORNING 48 *

Christina's door opens and she comes out dressed for school. She goes to Joan's bedroom.

CUT TO:

* 49 INT JOAN'S BEDROOM - DAY - EARLY MORNING 49 *

A bizarre sight. Joan is sitting in her bed with Carol Ann. They are busily at work on a pile of photographs. Photograph albums and other memorabilia are spread open in front of them on the bed. Systematically and methodically, the two women are removing every evidence of Uncle Greg. There is a small pile of Greg's heads between them in the center of the bed. Christina stops and takes in the scene, appalled by what's going on. Joan looks up and offers Christina a dazzling smile.

JOAN
Good morning, dearest heart.
Hurry downstairs and eat your
breakfast -- mustn't be late
for school...

CUT TO:

* 49A INT. UPSTAIRS LANDING - DAY 49A

Christina leaves Joan's bedroom. Halfway down the stairs she glances over to the framed photograph of Joan and Greg which we saw last night. Christina passes it, stops and then comes back. Greg's face has been torn out of the picture. The image remains of Joan embracing a man's headless body. A flash of recognition goes across Christina's face as she continues down the stiars and towards the breakfast room.

CUT TO:

* 49B EXT. BACK YARD - BRENTWOOD HOUSE - DAY 49B *

There are two long tables set up between the house and pool. At each table sit five women. Each table contains a stack of autographed 8 x 10 glossies of Joan. Woman #1 puts cardboard around the photo, passes it to woman #2 who stuffs it into an envelope, woman #3 addresses the envelope, woman #4 seals the envelope, woman #5 licks the stamp and hands it to Christina who smashes her little fist down to affix the stamp. The second table is a match, right down to little Christopher, age five, repeating Christina's actions. Standing next to Christopher, Carol Ann is supervising the operation.

CAROL ANN
Isn't this fun, Christopher?
You're doing such a wonderful
job!

Joan enters from the house. She stands proudly and surveys the efforts of her troops. Because of her presence, the tempo of the assembly line increases.

JOAN
Ginny, are we running short? Shall
I send for some more photographs?

GINNY
Oh no, Miss Crawford. The studio
just sent a new batch. We have
plenty.

JOAN
Good. You're all so gracious to help.
Let me send for some ice tea.

CUT TO:

50 OMITTED 50

51 EXT. CRAWFORD GARDEN - MORNING (SATURDAY) 51

Christina and Christopher are playing a game of tag in the garden, attempting to suppress their noise. Christina tackles Christopher. He lets out a loud shriek. Christina clamps her hand on Christopher's mouth to stifle the noise but too late. Joan's window slams open. We see Joan framed in the upstairs window with chin straps and her eyeshades hanging around her neck.

JOAN
(bellowing)
Goddamn it!

CUT TO:

CHRISTINA AND CHRISTOPHER

freeze with terror.

CUT TO:

52 INT. JOAN'S BEDROOM 52

Joan storms across her room, opens bedroom door, goes to the head of the stairs and shrieks.

JOAN
Carol Ann! I've told you to keep the children quiet. Now for Christ sakes, get them out of the garden!

CAROL ANN
(from the foot
of the stairs)
I'm sorry, Miss Crawford.

JOAN
(mutters)
Forget it. I'm awake now. Have Tina bring me my coffee.

CUT TO:

53 INT. JOAN'S BEDROOM - DAY 53

Christina entering room with tray and coffee. Joan is propped in her bed on a pillow. On her lap is a basin filled with ice and water which she applies to her face. Christina tentatively sets the tray down.

CHRISTINA
I'm sorry. I tried to be quiet, but we were playing and I forgot.

JOAN
You promised last night. I told you why. I told you how important it was.

CHRISTINA
I'm sorry, Mommie dearest.

JOAN
Go to your room and stay there until I come for you.

CUT TO:

54 INT. CHRISTINA'S BEDROOM - DAY 54

Christina is in her room playing with her beloved dolls. In a quiet but stern voice she is admonishing them.

CHRISTINA
(shaking her finger)
You were very, very bad to wake Mommie up like that. Very naughty. I told you Mommie had to sleep and be rested. Mommie has to be very beautiful Monday. Monday she has to see Mr. Mayer. Monday is so important. You were selfish and thoughtless and all you ever think of is yourself and you must learn to think about other people. You are bad, bad, spoiled children.

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED: 54

During this, CAMERA MOVES UP to find Joan in Christina's doorway observing the scene. A small ambiguously amused smile drifts across her face. Still unobserved by Christina, she EXITS the SCENE.

CUT TO:

55 INT. STAIRCASE - CRAWFORD HOME - LATER THAT DAY 55

Christina coming up the stairs in a bathing suit. She is happy, singing to herself as she skips across the landing and into her room. When she enters the room, she sees that every single one of her dolls is gone. Disappeared. She puts her hands up to her face. She turns and bolts out of the room, crossing the landing into Joan's room, barges in the room, trying not to cry.

CHRISTINA
My babies! Someone stole my babies!

Joan is at her dressing table rubbing cream into her elbows. Joan turns to face Christina with her most reasonable smile.

JOAN
That's good, darling. Now your babies won't wake you up when you need your rest...

CUT TO:

56 EXT./INT. THALBERG BUILDING - DAY 56

Joan, dressed in her absolute movie star best, goes up the stairs and into the building.

57 IN THE UPSTAIRS HALL 57

she slows down as she passes blown-up stills from her movies.

A MAN in a business suit comes up behind Joan and walks with her a few paces.

MAN
Joan, you look like a million!

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED: 57

JOAN
Thank you. Nice of you to say.

The man turns into a doorway. Joan goes through double glass doors at the far end of the hall.

CUT TO:

58 INT. L. B. MAYER'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY 58

There are two SECRETARIES at adjoining desks outside the closed door to Mayer's inner office. One secretary is on the phone as Joan walks in. The other stands up deferentially.

CONNIE
Good morning, Miss Crawford.

JOAN
Hello, Connie. That's a lovely blouse.

CONNIE
Thank you, Miss Crawford.

Connie, flattered and flustered at the compliment, comes around her desk and opens the door to Mayer's office, knocking first.

* 59 INT. L. B. MAYER'S OFFICE - REVERSE LONG SHOT - LOW ANGLE - DAY 59 *

Mayer's giant figure blocks the CAMERA but as he approaches Joan she is revealed, entering, the door closing behind her, where she pauses, luminous, beautiful, the Star.

MAYER
Joan. Look at you! Look! Eighteen years in the business, and who could hold a candle to you!

JOAN
You're always so kind.

MAYER
Kind, kind. Of all my picture family who turned out best, who never let me down? Joan Crawford! To all the new kids coming up, she's like a diamond. Class.

Joan masks her apprehension at the length and drift of his build-up.

(CONTINUED)

* 59 CONTINUED: 59 *

JOAN
L. B....

MAYER
Have I ever lied to you in your whole career, or given you a piece of bad advice?

JOAN
Never. Never! Your treatment of me's been divine.

MAYER
Joan! My Joan! You're in a position to do me a favor that will be as big a favor to you as it is to me.

JOAN
You don't have to ask. You only have to tell me. There isn't anything I wouldn't do...

MAYER
Good. I want you to leave Metro.

CLOSEUP JOAN

She doesn't pretend to think it's a joke. The shock is real and even unconsciously expected. But it's immense. Her face dissolves for a moment only to reform into a pretense of a social smile that keeps on fading.

JOAN
Leave Metro? Leave Metro?

MAYER
Your pictures, one after another, are losing money. The Theatre Owners voted you box office poison. Even so, for years I paid no attention. You know I don't give up easy, Joan. We'll pay you off on the contract. You can't afford to make three or four more losers for us. Then, it'll be too late for you to try elsewhere.

CAMERA MOVES WITH him, his body blocking out Joan again, until at her side she is revealed standing up to face him, and then turn away in an explosion of protest.

JOAN
It's the scripts. Bad pictures. Bad directors.

* 59 CONTINUED: 59 *

MAYER
Bad with you. Good with others.

There are sudden tears in his eyes, and he pats his eyes with a handkerchief.

TIGHT TWO SHOT - FACE TO FACE

JOAN
I keep begging you for a script with some balls. Write it for Gable and I'll play the hell out of it...

MAYER
Listen to me, Joan. Listen with your ears and not with your pride. With me feeling is more important than money. You're a great star. You're Hollywood Royalty. You're still beautiful. Look at yourself now. Who can ask more of a woman, a dancer, an actress, a symbol for all the world. But styles change. You'll leave. We have creative differences. We don't want to argue and fight with each other because we love each other. Every studio will think they're smarter than me. They'll try to finesse Mayer. You'll get one, two, three, four, five pictures. You may get a big hit. They'll laugh at me.

JOAN
(in tears)
And will you be sorry then?

MAYER
I'm sorry now. But here there's no confidence anymore. There's no hope. It's time for change. Let's be friends, Joan. I wish you prove us wrong. I wish you success. New voices, new faces, a breath of fresh air. Who knows?

But she knows and she breaks down, sobbing, and he holds her tenderly, comforting her.

MAYER
(continuing)
Joan, Joan, don't do this to yourself.

(CONTINUED)

60 EXT. MGM LOT - DAY (SHORTLY AFTER) 60

Joan stands by the door of her convertible, outside her dressing room door. The car is filled with boxes, paintings, the paraphernalia of years. Mary, Joan's wardrobe lady, slams the trunk shut. Her eyes are red from crying. She walks hesitantly towards Joan, fighting more tears. They give each other a big hug. Tears trickle down both their faces. They stand back and muster a brave smile. No words. Joan gets in behind the wheel, starts the car, and begins to drive slowly down the street. A MAN in the door of the prop department waves at Joan with a big smile.

PROP MAN
Good luck, Joan!

Joan waves at him, keeps driving slowly. She passes a MAN ON A BICYCLE.

MAN ON A BICYCLE
See ya, Joanie.

JOAN
Thanks, George.

Joan smiles. She turns the corner and stops the car in a private place. She closes her eyes and takes a deep breath. She bows her head down on the steering wheel. Suddenly she stops and sits up very straight taking another deep breath.

She throws her shoulders back like a champion. She twists the rearview mirror to see herself and wipes under her eyes. She sets her jaw and gives herself a

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She throws her shoulders back like a and sits up tall and square. She twists the rearview mirror around to see herself and wipes under the eyes. She sets her jaw and gives herself a big smile in the mirror. She puts the mirror back in its original position and starts driving again. She turns a corner and begins to head down the long road towards the studio gate. She drives slowly down the avenue, which has people on either side of it, waving to her, coming to see Joan Crawford leaving the studio. They wave, blow kisses and call out AD LIBBED comments like: "We love ya', Joan;" "Good luck!" "Goodbye, Joanie!" Joan smiles and waves to them regally as she makes the long, slow drive off the lot, like a queen going into exile. She finally approaches the gate itself. She sits up even straighter and holds her chin high.

GUARD

Good luck, Miss Crawford.

JOAN

Thank you, Tommy.

Joan drives through the gate, her teeth clenched in a tight smile. She turns the corner and pulls the car over to the curb. She takes a deep breath and exhales it in exhaustion. She lets her head rest on the steering wheel, worn out by the performance she just gave.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CRAWFORD GARDEN - DAY

Joan and Christina are at the tool shed near the rose garden. Joan puts tools into a wheelbarrow: flower clippers, hedge, trimmers, an axe, a rake, a shovel. She hands a bamboo rake to Christina, which is twice her height and indicates for her to follow. Joan wheels the barrow toward the rose garden. Christina follows, dragging the rake behind her. Joan is seething with anger, which she keeps under control.

JOAN

Goddammed gardener. Now that I can only afford him once a week he doesn't give a damn. Start raking under there!

Joan points under a tree. Christina starts wielding the rake, struggling to scrape leaves with it. She watches her mother warily, recognizing how manic she is. Joan takes long-handled clippers out of the barrow and begins cutting branches of flowers off a rose tree.

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED: 62

CAROL ANN (CONT'D)
Your mother wants you downstairs in the rose garden. You, too, Christopher.

CHRISTINA
What? What's happening?

CAROL ANN
(moving to untie young Christopher)
Come along. Put on your robes and slippers. Your mother wants you right away.

CUT TO:

63 EXT. ROSE GARDEN - NIGHT 63

As Christina and Christopher followed by Carol Ann arrive, Joan whirls to face them.

JOAN
(pointing to fallen rose bushes with a sweeping motion)
I want those branches cleared out of here. Now. Tina, get the wheelbarrow and rake. Carol Ann, Christopher, start gathering the branches up.

She immediately turns and attacks next bush.

JOAN
(continuing; to herself)
Goddamn... goddamn lazy gardener.
(pause for breath)
Only comes once a week...
(pause)
Doesn't give a damn...
(pause)
Lets the place go to hell...
(pause)
No loyalty... They're... all Judas'.
(pause; breath)
Lazy, unfaithful... Bastards!!!

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: 63

Joan savagely attacks another rosebush, flattening it with one powerful slice of the shears. CAMERA IS TIGHT ON Joan as she smiles and advances to the next one.

CUT TO:

64 CHRISTINA 64

who has returned with wheelbarrow, stares at her mother, paralyzed with terror. Joan glistens with perspiration and blood. She continues to demolish the bushes even more ferociously.

JOAN
(over her shoulder
as she hacks away)
Tina! Bring me the axe!

Christina runs to the tool shed and quickly returns with a lethal looking axe. By this time Joan has cut down every single rosebush. Left standing in solitary dominance of the garden is a lovely tall full orange tree, laden with ripe and near-ripe fruit. It is a beautiful, healthy, mature specimen, nearly 12 feet high. Not hesitating an instant, Joan grabs the axe and furiously begins to attack the tree's trunk.

CUT TO:

CHRISTINA, CHRISTOPHER AND CAROL ANN

as they watch, horrified. Too frightened to object, they can only stare, as we...

CUT BACK TO:

65 JOAN 65

chopping away until the tree begins to topple. As the giant tree goes down, Joan stands triumphantly holding her axe, as she surveys the havoc she has wrought.

CUT TO:

66 INT. BRENTWOOD HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY 66

Sitting in the living room is a delegation of ten LADIES. Their ages range from late twenties to mid-sixties. They are the executive council of presidents of midwestern Crawford fan clubs. Joan is their idol. There are also two PHOTOGRAPHERS. All wait with a hushed expectancy for her arrival.

CUT TO:

67 INT. TOP OF STAIRS - DAY 67

Joan, dressed to the nines in a stunning new day suit, makes one of her entrances down the staircase, met at the bottom by Carol Ann. The ladies have risen to their feet reverentially.

JOAN
How lovely of you to take the time to come see me. It's ladies like you who make it possible. I depend on all of you.

MRS. MORGAN
(moving toward a floral tribute in the center of the room)
On behalf of the millions of fans in the Midwest, please accept this token of our esteem.

The heart-shaped garland of flowers reads "ALWAYS IN THE HEARTS OF MID-AMERICA. WITH LOVE, JOAN CRAWFORD FAN CLUBS."

MRS. MORGAN
(continuing)
Two years are too long, Miss Crawford. We're waiting for your next picture.

JOAN
I'm waiting too. Until I find one to make us all happy.

PANNING SHOT

A round of applause and faces ending on Joan.

CUT TO:

THE TEN LADIES

posed by the floral tribute as the president in the foreground presents the heart to Joan. The Photographers are popping their flashes as usual.

Joan is choked with emotion. Tears brim.

JOAN
I don't know how I can thank you, all of you, for your loyalty and your love.

A beat as Joan looks admiringly at the flowers, then up at the worshipful faces of her visitors. Joan reaches out, overflowing with emotion, and hugs Mrs. Morgan. Flashbulbs still pop. Joan begins to speak but her voice cracks.

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED: 67

JOAN
(continuing)
I...

Joan touches the flowers and looks down at them, overcome with emotion.

JOAN
(continuing)
It's you... my fans... that...
keep me going...

CUT TO:

* 68 OMITTED 68 *

(Refer to scene 49B)

69 OMITTED 69

* 70 INT. BREAKFAST ROOM - DAY 70 *

Christina, Joan, Christopher and Carol Ann are in the middle of lunch.

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED: 70

Each has a plate of rare roast beef half eaten. Christina's plate has not been touched. Visible through the windows in the back yard are the fans still busy at work in the hot sun.

JOAN
Christina, you haven't touched your lunch.

CHRISTINA
It's raw.

JOAN
It's rare, not raw.

CHRISTINA
But it's got all this red juice when I push on it.

JOAN
Then don't push on it. Rare meat is good for you, darling. The doctor said so.

Christina cuts a small piece of meat, which is terribly rare. She starts to put a piece into her mouth, can't do it, and lowers the fork.

JOAN
(continuing)
Darling, meat loses its vitamins if it's overcooked.

CHRISTINA
I had my vitamins this morning. Pills.

Joan speaks to Carol Ann with a strained smile.

JOAN
She negotiates everything like a goddamn Hollywood agent.
(to Christina)
Christina, stop acting like a spoiled brat.

There is a deadly silence as mother and daughter stare at one another in a test of wills. Christina won't give in. Finally, Joan breaks the silence.

JOAN
(continuing)
You're not getting up from this table until you've eaten that meat.

CUT TO:

71 INT. JOAN'S BREAKFAST ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON (SEVERAL HOURS LATER) 71

The late afternoon light slants across Christina, who is sitting alone at the table. Her untouched plate of meat is in front of her.

This is one stubborn little girl.

Joan comes into the breakfast area and stands in front of Christina. Joan studies her for a moment.

JOAN
You may get up from the table now.

Christina slowly gets up and starts to leave.

JOAN
(continuing)
Just a moment, young lady. Put your plate in the refrigerator.

Christina picks up her plate and goes into the kitchen. She walks to the refrigerator and starts to put the plate in. Joan is right behind her.

JOAN
(continuing)
I'm having a dinner party tonight, Christina, and I don't want to be disturbed. You'll have dinner in your room.
(points to the plate)
You will finish everything on that plate.

CUT TO:

72 INT. JOAN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 72

Remnants of dinner party. Joan finishes off a stiff vodka, refills and turns out lamp, starts up the stairs. Pauses. She continues up and opens the door of the children's room.

CUT TO:

73 INT. CHILDREN'S ROOM - NIGHT 73

Joan walks over to Christopher, adjusts his sleep safe, tenderly brushes a wisp of hair back from his forehead.

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED: 73

She crosses to Christina, sees the untouched plate of roast beef. She looks from roast beef to the sleeping Christina, shakes her head as if to say, "*what am I doing to do with this child*," reaches toward Christina and gently tucks the blanket closer to her chin. Then she sighs and picks up the offending plate of uneaten beef and exits the room. Apparently she's given in.

CUT TO:

74 INT. CRAWFORD BREAKFAST ROOM - CLOSEUP - DAY 74

on the same plate. The beef is now covered with congealed fat. It looks ghastly. It is still untouched. Joan, Christopher, Carol Ann and Christina are at the table. Everyone is enjoying a breakfast of scrambled eggs, bacon, orange juice and milk except Christina. In front of her is the same plate of meat.

Christina's willful, determined expression remains as it was at lunch yesterday. Christina and Joan stare at each other, their eyes locked in a further escalation in the contest of wills. Finally Joan speaks.

JOAN
You may drink your glass of milk
and then you are excused from the
table. Hurry or you'll be late
for school.

Christina gulps down the milk, stands up angrily and starts to leave.

JOAN
(continuing)
Christina! Put that plate back
in the refrigerator!

Christina takes her plate and goes through the swinging doors into the kitchen. Joan stands staring at the swinging doors. This child is a handful. Joan lets out a sigh of frustration and exhaustion.

Joan turns to Carol Ann.

JOAN
(continuing)
Why must everything be a contest?

CUT TO:

75 EXT. BRENTWOOD STREET - LATE AFTERNOON 75

Joan is driving slowly down a residential street. She peers carefully up and down the street, looking nervously for Christina.

Joan turns a corner, driving slowly. She sees two ten-year-old girls from behind, one of them blonde. She speeds up, but slams her fist on the steering wheel as she gets closer and realizes it isn't Christina. She drives to the end of the street, turns again, having circled the block.

She turns down another street. She pulls alongside a MAN walking a dog.

JOAN
Have you seen a blonde girl,
about ten?

MAN
Say, aren't you...?

Joan accelerates before he can finish.

76 ANOTHER ANGLE - JOAN 76

She turns another corner. Christina is up ahead, trudging along the side of the road. Joan speeds to the child, then hits the brakes. She cuts the engine and jumps out. She runs toward Christina, who turns and cringes reflexively, unsure whether to run or freeze. Joan's relieved tone of voice reassures her. Joan hugs her tightly.

JOAN
Oh, God, you scared me.
(angry)
What do you mean, running off
like that?
(relieved)
You had me worried sick.
(angry)
I ought to blister you.
(relieved)
Jesus! What if the papers got
hold of this?

Joan holds Christina away from her, to inspect her, to reassure herself that she's got her back. Joan smiles; Christina doesn't return the smile. She doesn't trust Joan, doesn't know what to expect. Joan smiles again, pleadingly. Christina offers a tentative smile and Joan gathers her back into her arms in an almost suffocating embrace.

Joan whispers to Christina as the child is squeezed against her, looking out over Joan's shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED:

JOAN
(continuing)
When will you understand? I do things for your own good.

Christina is half smothered in her mother's arms. Her face is blank. Joan loosens her grip and holds Christina away from her again. Christina looks down at the ground and Joan gently raises her chin so their eyes meet. Joan smiles at Christina seductively. Joan senses something is still wrong.

JOAN
(continuing)
Tina?

Christina smiles self-consciously. Then she speaks cautiously.

CHRISTINA
I'm hungry.

Joan bursts out laughing, gives her a kiss.

JOAN
I'll bet you are! Okay -- let's us sneak over to Pinkie's and I'll buy you a delicious hot dog and a great big chocolate malt.

Christina nods enthusiastically. Joan gets serious.

JOAN
(continuing)
I love you more than anything, Christina. I love you very much.

A beat as Christina looks at her mother and knows just what she's supposed to reply.

CHRISTINA
I love you, too, Mommie dearest.

Joan grabs her back into that crushing hug.

CUT TO:

76A INT. CHRISTINA'S BEDROOM - CLOSE SHOT - NIGHT 76A

Christina asleep, a dim light from the hallway, peace on her face, but angry words, muffled by many walls, but sometimes clear, shake her awake.

(CONTINUED)

76A CONTINUED: 76A

JOAN'S VOICE

You've been snooping around ever since I got this job...

(a long pause, now more furiously)

You've been snooping around since I got this job, trying to find out what it is.

Christina sits up with fright at that familiar tone of family fury.

JOAN'S VOICE

(continuing)

Well, now you know! You know, don't you?

Every word isn't clear, but enough for the violence to come through. ANGLE WIDENS to show the nighttime bedroom, Christopher asleep and strapped into his bed, the bedroom door open to the dimly lit hallway, and the Brentwood silence outside. The fight goes on, but Carol Ann's words are just sounds, Joan's the same until they suddenly yell out.

JOAN'S VOICE

(continuing)

... And you know it now!

A muffled REPLY from Carol Ann, and then the SOUND of a BLOW. Suddenly Joan's voice erupts with laughter.

CLOSE SHOT ON CHRISTINA

who shrinks back in her bed, and lies there, wondering, terrified. Her mother's voice is low now, just the timbre of her speaking, speaking, suddenly it is sharp again, cutting through the walls.

JOAN

Veda!

The exchange with Carol Ann continues now, rising with growing anger and therefore growing clearer, although Carol Ann's answers are dim, just sounds lost in the walls. ANGLE WIDENS as Christina gets out of bed, and the CAMERA MOVES WITH HER as like a thief she makes her way to the hallway, ready to run back to bed at the slightest alarm. The fight going on in her mother's bedroom is clearer now, her mother getting angrier and angrier in her typical way while Carol Ann's words are just said, without much expression, as if, as is usual, afraid to assert herself. But the words are clearer.

76B INT. HALLWAY - MOVING SHOT 76

Christina makes her way slowly to her mother's closed door.

JOAN'S VOICE

In my closet?

A MURMUR from Carol Ann.

JOAN'S VOICE

(continuing)

All your handkerchiefs are in your own top drawer where they always are. What were you doing snooping around in my closet?

There is a long MUMBLE of unclear words from Carol Ann and by now Christina is at her mother's door, listening in the silence of this enormous house where the only sounds are the fury about to erupt again behind the door. Suddenly a chair falls over inside Joan's room. Christina runs away but stops as she hears her mother yell again.

JOAN'S VOICE

(continuing)

You've been snooping around ever since I got this job, trying to find out what it is.

This unknown job startles and interests Christina, and at the same time, the anger which isn't directed at her makes her lean closer to the door.

JOAN'S VOICE

(continuing)

Well, now you know! You know, don't you?

CAROL ANN'S VOICE

Know what. Know what, Mother?

This even reply and strange use of mother brings Christina firmly against the door, listening avidly.

JOAN'S VOICE

You know that's my uniform.

CAROL ANN'S VOICE

Your uniform?

Suddenly the voices die down inside. They are speaking but quietly to each other. Joan is urging something.

(CONTINUED)

76B CONTINUED: 76B

JOAN'S VOICE

Just louder!

CAROL ANN'S VOICE

(with anger)

I'm really not surprised. You've never spoken of your people -- who you came from -- so perhaps it's natural -- maybe that's why Father...

And now a great blow, a slam against something, and Christina, terrified for her mother, swings the door open, crying aloud with anxiety.

CHRISTINA

Mommie!

76C FULL SHOT 76C

FAVORING Christina's head and shoulders and in Joan's bedroom, Carol Ann standing up, surprised, a movie script open in her hands while Joan is near the wall which she has just struck.

CHRISTINA

(running to mother)

What's wrong, what's wrong?

Joan catches her in her arms and breaks into laughter.

JOAN

Oh my darling. Sh... I'm just rehearsing with Carol Ann for a new picture. Oh, sweetheart, you were frightened...

She kisses and hugs her as the CAMERA CLOSES IN on them and Carol Ann pats Christina's hair.

JOAN

(continuing; leading Christina to her bed)

Now, be a good girl and sit quietly, while Mommie does her work.

She props Christina up in her bed and takes a position, while Carol Ann sits down at a make-believe piano, but reads from the script. Joan, of course, knows her lines.

(CONTINUED)

76C CONTINUED: 76

JOAN
(continuing)
And for God's sakes, Carol Ann, try to get some expression in your lines, or read them faster. Don't keep me waiting or I lose the emotion. Let's go.

The child watches as Joan gets ready.

JOAN
(continuing)
I won't slap the wall this time. I'll just clap my hands. Like this.
(claps)
Let's start where I grab you by the shoulders and yank you around. I'm going to start real high up, and don't hold me up.

Joan does as she said and Carol Ann is pulled violently around, holding her script ready to read.

JOAN
(continuing)
You've been snooping around ever since I got this job, trying to find out what it is. Well, now you know! You know, don't you?

CAROL ANN
Know what? Know what, Mother?

JOAN
(softly)
You know that's my uniform.

CAROL ANN
Your uniform?

JOAN
Yes, I'm waiting on tables in a Glendale restaurant. And you know it, now.

CAROL ANN
My mother, a common waitress...

Christina's face is fascinated. This is her mother and it isn't. In a way it's true, yet false. The CAMERA MOVES IN ON HER, LOSING THE OTHERS while a vision takes its place, the vision of Christina herself being an actress... something so incredibly wonderful.

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

76D INT. CHRISTINA'S BEDROOM - CLOSE SHOT 76D

Christina back in bed, under covers, listening as Carol Ann speaks quietly not to wake the boy. ANGLE WIDENS.

CAROL ANN
Your mother's been *practicing* and practicing. You know how perfect she always wants to be, but now she must be perfect. You understand?

CHRISTINA
She wants everything to be perfect.

CAROL ANN
That's why sometimes she can be hard on people she loves, like you and Christopher.

CHRISTINA
She loves you, too, Carol Ann.

CAROL ANN
Well this time it's even more important. They're *making your* mother take a screen test... you know what that is?

CHRISTINA
When they aren't sure they want you?

CAROL ANN
That's right. You know how shameful that is for her? How brave she is... She's doing it for all of us. She wants this film. She knows she's right. She is this character, Mildred Pierce. She knows, she knows, and we have to help her. We will, won't we?

CHRISTINA
I will, I will...

Carol Ann kisses the child, and leaves the room, the ANGLE WIDENING with her, until it is there as earlier, the footsteps going down the hall, a door closing and suddenly the voice of Joan, once again.

JOAN
Veda!

CUT TO:

76E INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE SITTING ROOM, BAR, ETC. - CLOSE SHOT - NIGHT 76E

An elaborate radio phonograph is broadcasting the Academy Award program. ANGLE WIDENS. The lights and shadows of the living room reveal Christina and Christopher wearing their nightclothes and bathrobes, sitting side by side on a sofa, listening, happy to be up so late and at the same time a little edgy. Joan, in a beautiful dressing gown, is stalking the room, and Carol Ann is close to the set, listening avidly. It's very late for the children, but the electricity in the room is intense.

ANNOUNCER
... He is now opening the sealed ballot.

A new VOICE breaks in.

VOICE
The winner for the best male actor is...

Joan has just put away half of her vodka drink, and glass still in hand, listens...

VOICE
(continuing)
Ray Milland, in The Lost Weekend.

Joan makes herself a new drink as the APPLAUSE breaks out from the loudspeaker in the grand phonograph.

JOAN
He was good.

She walks around the room, takes a Kleenex and ostentatiously blows her nose. Everybody watches her. The radio will continue on, announcing the next set of awards for the Best Actress.

JOAN
(continuing)
You think I was right not to be there, Carol Ann?

CAROL ANN
Yes I do.

JOAN
It's a lot of bull anyway, the way they vote. They make deals, the studio votes in blocs.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

76E CONTINUED:

JOAN (CONT'D)
(drinks)
Well, the best actor is a vote for a lush. That figures. God, I hate this night. It turns every damn year into a crisis.

The Radio Voice now goes on to announce the nominations for the best actress: Ingrid Bergman, in The Bells of St. Mary's; Joan Crawford, in Mildred Pierce; Greer Garson in The Valley of Decision; Gene Tierney in Leave Her to Heaven.

JOAN
(continuing)
I wish I really did have pneumonia. I wish I was raving mad with fever and didn't even have to listen.

CHRISTINA
You're going to win, I know, Mommie.

ANNOUNCER
He is getting the envelope now. He is opening it.

Suddenly Joan sits down on the couch, puts her arms around her children, and closes her eyes.

CHRISTINA
Everybody said you were so wonderful.

CAROL ANN
The picture's a hit.

JOAN
Oh, shut up!

ANNOUNCER
And the winner is Joan Crawford in Mildred Pierce...

The shouts of the audience from the set is drowned out by Joan leaping from the couch with a great yell of triumph, Carol Ann applauding. Joan is dancing round, and Christina runs around her, just as from outside there comes a tumult of APPLAUSE, HORNS BLOWING, VOICES. The NOISE INCREASES and Joan just stands there, Christina nearby. Joan kneels, embraces her, kisses her, then is up.

76E CONTINUED: (2) 76E

She runs to a mirror, studies her face, her looks, a few touches. Outside the VOLUME BUILDS.

Joan is in all her glory now. For a moment, the future and the past glory are one with the present. And she goes to the foyer, following Carol Ann.

76F INT. FOYER/EXT. FRONT OF HOUSE - NIGHT 76

At a signal from Joan, Carol Ann opens the door. The gates are open, the lawn is filled with the fan club ladies as well as just the curious. Behind are headlights, horns, cars. The *TELEPHONE RINGS AND RINGS* in the house. The children watch, and Christina drinks in the glory of stardom that now like a heavenly radiance floods upon her mother and, therefore, on her. As Joan appears, the applause is deafening, while behind dimly, occasionally, the radio goes on with the Academy presentations.

JOAN
Please...

And the voices die down. Joan is Camille, ill, but brave, happy, but frail, standing there. She suddenly holds out her arms to her fans.

JOAN
(continuing)
I would rather be here with you
than anywhere else in the world.

Joan, Joan they shout at her.

JOAN
(continuing)
You, all of you here and everywhere
gave me this award. I accept it
from you, and you alone. I love
all of you. And please, excuse me,
good night.

They applaud and Joan retires, as if she can barely walk. Carol Ann waves to the fans and closes the door as Joan suddenly takes off, spinning and turning, alive, happy, triumphant, gathering Christina in one hand, whirling, whirling, while the crowd applauds outside, the PHONE RINGS inside, and RADIO GOES ON AND ON. Now, Christina is up in Joan's arms, held tight, face to face, whirling, whirling.

DISSOLVE TO:

77 INT. CRAWFORD'S HOUSE - BRENTWOOD - NIGHT 77

The DOORBELL RINGS. Christina opens the door to admit a handsome stud, rather younger than Joan. The man is CHARLIE DUVAL. Charlie flashes his lovely white teeth in a winning smile.

CHARLIE
I'm Charlie. You're Christina?

Christina ushers him in.

CHRISTINA
I'll tell Mommie you're here.

Christina goes to foot of stairs.

CHRISTINA
(continuing)
Mommie, 'Uncle' Charlie is here.

JOAN'S VOICE
(yells downstairs)
Be a darling and mix him a drink.

Christina smiles sweetly at Duval and crosses to the bar.

CUT TO:

78 INT. JOAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (LATER) 78

Joan and Duval are in bed. On the nightstand, empty glasses. He is fast asleep with a smile of satisfaction on his face. Joan is lying on her back rigid, eyes wide open. Suddenly her hand reaches out and nudges Charlie. He rolls over and puts his arms around Joan.

CHARLIE
(half asleep)
What's the matter, baby, still hungry?

She smiles and turns to him. Charlie leans up on one elbow waiting to service the Queen of the Screen. Joan reaches out, lightly caresses his cheek, flashing a lovely Crawford smile.

JOAN
Get dressed. Get your ass out of here.

Charlie is astonished.

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED: 7

CHARLIE
It's four a.m. Are you crazy?

JOAN
Get out. Now.

CHARLIE
(rolls over)
I'm going back to sleep. Wake me at nine.

Joan shifts her position in bed, places both feet in the small of the man's back and violently kicks him out of bed.

JOAN
I said get dressed and get the hell out!

CHARLIE
(picking himself up off the floor, he does what he can to salvage his dignity)
What a bitch!

JOAN
I can buy men like you anytime!

CHARLIE
Women your age have to!

THWACK! She slugs him. THWACK! He slugs her back. Twice. Joan is stunned, not prepared for this violence. Scared, she races to the French doors and goes onto the porch, closing the doors behind her for protection.

JOAN
(through the glass)
Get out or I'll scream and get the cops up here.

CUT TO:

79 INT. CHILDREN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 79

Christina and Christopher. Their eyes wide open.

CUT TO:

80 INT. JOAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 80

Duval putting on his pants. Joan is still on the balcony.

CHARLIE
(yells at Joan while
he finishes dressing)
You goddamned screwed up selfish
actress bitch!

JOAN
(yelling back
through the
glass)
Get out of here.
GET OUT OF HERE!

CUT TO:

81 INT. HALL OUTSIDE JOAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 81

Charlie exits the bedroom, crosses the hall and down the stairs. Christina and Christopher peer out the door at his departing figure. They rush to their window to watch him...

82 EXT. HOUSE 82

... leave and see Joan fling a shoe which glances off his shoulder. Joan is still on her balcony. She hurls the second shoe. This one bounces off the hood of his car. He looks up at her, still half dressed.

CHARLIE
Missed, bitch!

JOAN
YOU GET OUT OF HERE!

83 THE CHILDREN 83

rush back to their beds. Christina hurried straps Christopher back into his bed.

CUT TO:

84 JOAN 84

She is trying to get back into her bedroom through the French doors, which have locked from the inside.

JOAN
(muttering)
Son of a bitch... rotten bastard...

She looks for something to break the window with, finds nothing.

JOAN
(continuing, muttering)
Should have saved one shoe.

She begins to laugh at the incongruous situation. She gets to the children's balcony door which is also locked. She --

85 ANGLE 85

-- taps on the door. Christina gets up and lets her in. Joan stands there laughing.

CHRISTINA
Mommie? Mommie?

Joan has difficulty coming down from laughing. She cups Christina's face in her hands.

JOAN
Oh, my God, Tina, it's all so crazy. Life is crazy, men are crazy. Let's be crazy, too.

CUT TO:

* 86 EXT. ESCONDIDO BEACH - DAWN 86 *

The sea is silver with the promise of light. Joan walks slowly with her arm round Christina's shoulder.

JOAN
You're shivering. Are you cold?

CHRISTINA
No, Mommie.

Joan cups Christina's hands in her own.

86 CONTINUED: 86

JOAN
Cold hands, warm heart.
You like it here?

CHRISTINA
Yes, Mommie.

Joan puts her arms around Christina, draws her close, holding her like a small child which Christina is not.

JOAN
You were born here, sort of. It was here I said I wanted you. I wanted to find you somewhere in the world and make *you mine. You're* really all I have now, darling. It's hard to be alone. I always was really alone until you. You were a perfect baby. You were mine.

Christina feels loved, wanted, safe. She clings to her mother.

CHRISTINA
I'll always love you, Mommie.

JOAN
Do you miss not having a father?

CHRISTINA
Sometimes.

JOAN
Hell, I never had one either. My mother married three times, but they all went away. Things were hard then...like when I was six and that busted milk bottle cut through the tendon in my foot, and they said, "Poor kid, she'll never dance like she wants to, she'll always walk with a limp...". I showed them. I'd sneak out of the house to the loading platform behind the Lawton Theatre and dance in the hot sunshine on the blistering concrete till I nearly fainted.... And I kept dancing and dancing, and when Mr. Shubert gave me the end shot in the Chorus, and every rich sport was trying to put the make on me, no matter what was offered, I kept to myself, and gave them all the kiss-off... till I danced my way from Chicago to New York and from New York out here.

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTINA
From New York all the way to here?

JOAN
(Laughing lightly)
Poor kid. Poor kid, you're frozen and you must think Mommie's got a screw loose...Christina, no matter how tough sometimes it is to understand, try not to be too hard on Mommie. Try not to judge her. Tell me you understand that... Do you?

Joan embraces her hard, looking her in the eyes.

CHRISTINA
Yes, Mommie.

Joan holds Christina close and gives her a long look.

JOAN
What do you want? What's the one thing you want most in the world?

Christina takes her time, and when she answers, she is dead serious.

CHRISTINA
I want you to love me.

JOAN
(means it)
Oh, sweetie, what an easy wish.
(hugs Christina)
I do love you. If that's all you want, you'll have the happiest *life a girl could ever dream of...*

They look adoringly in one another's eyes, and we CUT TO:

87 INT. JOAN'S DRESSING ROOM - BRENTWOOD HOUSE - NIGHT 87

Joan is wearing a long black nightgown and robe. She is preparing for bed. She takes a sip from her vodka glass and tissues off the layer of cold cream on her face. She applies lotion with a cotton ball, then takes a paper Japanese fan and fans her face to dry the lotion. She then hooks on her chin strap. She scrutinizes her face, pulling closer to the mirror. She pulls the skin back on her cheeks and eyes, smoothing out the lines. Then she puts on a cream that leaves her face ghostly white.

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED: 87

Next she puts her black satin eyeshade over her head, leaving the eye patches at her hairline, like a pair of sunglasses propped on her head. She takes another swig of vodka, sucks in her stomach and stands tall, examining herself in the mirror. With a sigh, she walks out.

88 INT. CHILDREN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 88

Joan stands at the door to their bedroom, light streaming in behind her. She sees they are both sleeping. She bends down to pick up a sweater on the floor.

She turns on a light in the closet and begins to hang up the sweater when she freezes. She stares at a dress that is on a wire hanger, just back from the dry cleaner, then yanks it off the rack. Her eyes widen as she pulls the dress off the hanger.

JOAN
(shouting)
A wire hanger!

Christina sits up in bed, startled awake.

CHRISTINA'S POV - JOAN

Her view of Joan is of a monstrous figure in a flowing black nightgown, stark white face, and black eye mask up on her forehead, chin strap below. Joan's eyes are glittering with rage.

JOAN
How many times do I have to tell
you, no wire hangers!!!

Joan turns back to the closet and in a frenzied rage pulls all the clothes off the bar they're hanging on and flings them into the room. She grabs the sweater boxes from the shelf and hurls their contents into the room. Christina holds her pillow against her. Christopher, trapped in his harness, lies still as a possum, only his fear-widened eyes following his mother's movements. When Joan has emptied the closet she strides to Christina, who cringes as her mother's hand reaches out for her. Joan grabs Christina by the hair and pulls her out of the bed. The child yells in pain and fear as Joan drags her towards the closet.

Joan then lets go of her and starts attacking her bed, ripping off the sheets and blanket and tossing them into the middle of the room where some of them fall on top of the cringing Christina, burying her. Christina pokes her head out from under, scared to look, but scared not to.

ANGLE ON JOAN

who suddenly spies another wire hanger on the floor.

(CONTINUED)

She snatches it up and starts beating Christina through the covering of bedclothes.

JOAN
(yelling)
No wire hangers!

CHRISTINA
Stop, Mommie! Please stop!

JOAN
Why do you always defy me? When will you learn! No wire hangers!

Joan stops pounding on Christina. She grabs the child by the wrist and drags her out from under the blankets.

JOAN
(continuing)
Now clean up your mess!

Joan turns towards the open bathroom door and her expression becomes even more crazed. She pulls Christina towards the bathroom, the child dragging behind her along the carpet.

JOAN
(continuing)
Did you scrub the bathroom today?

Christina, too frightened and shocked to let herself cry, staggers to her feet as they reach the bathroom door and Joan turns on the light.

CHRISTINA
Yes, Mommie.

Joan whirls on her, raising her hand as if to slap her. Christina shies.

JOAN
'Yes, Mommie' what?

CHRISTINA
Yes, Mommie dearest.

Joan lets go of Christina and kneels down beside the sink, running her fingers across the floor, which is immaculate.

JOAN
You call this 'clean'?

(CONTINUED)

88 CONTINUED: (2) 88

CHRISTINA
(quivering)
Miss Jenkins said it was clean.

Joan yanks open the cabinet under the sink, pulls out a can of cleanser and stands up, grabbing Christina again.

JOAN
Is that all you can do? Contradict your mother?

Joan smashes the cleanser can down on Christina's head and hits her several times with it until the cardboard can bursts open and the white powder goes flying everywhere, mostly onto Christina.

CHRISTINA
(screaming)
Help! Stop! No! Please!
Stop! Help!

Joan flings the broken can against the wall and shoves Christina further into the bathroom.

JOAN
You'll get no help. You'll clean up your mess by yourself. And I'll inspect in the morning, you lazy defiant little bitch!

Joan storms out of the room, slamming the bedroom door behind her. There is a beat. Nobody moves. Christopher slithers out of his restraint. He gets up and goes to the bathroom, from whence comes MUFFLED SOBBING NOISES. Christina looks up at him, wiping her face with a washcloth, the white gritty powder all over her.

CHRISTOPHER
I'll help you.

Panicked, Christina stops crying.

CHRISTINA
Go strap yourself in. She'd kill me if she found out.

Christina takes a deep breath, looks around at the tornadoed room. She shakes her head in amazement. Her next words are ones she's rarely used, grown-up, forbidden ones.

(CONTINUED)

88 CONTINUED: (3) 88

CHRISTINA
(continuing)
Jeezis Christ.

CUT TO:

89 INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 89

The room is dominated by a magnificent Christmas tree. The tree is completely decorated and the packages are placed carefully around it. Joan, Christina and Christopher are being interviewed for radio. The children sit stiffly, hoping they will remember their lines, knowing a performance is expected of them.

The (non-twin) twins are tucked at her feet.

Once again, flashbulbs pop. A TECHNICIAN counts 6,5, 4,3,2,1 -- now.

INTERVIEWER
(effusive and phony
-- but America
bought it)
No report on Christmas would be complete without a description of how one Hollywood family spends this holiday... so now let's hop into an imaginary sleigh and whisk out to the home of one of America's foremost actresses, Miss Joan Crawford.

JOAN
(her most gracious,
movie star manner)
We are so very happy to have you with us. This is my daughter, Christina.

CHRISTINA
(so brightly)
Hello, everybody.

JOAN
And my son, Christopher.

CHRISTOPHER
Hi.

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED: 89

INTERVIEWER
Miss Crawford, could you tell us about what you would call your most exciting Christmas?

JOAN
I think the happiest moment of my life was the first Christmas the children came into my life. I don't see how Christmas can be enjoyed without children around.

INTERVIEWER
Well, all America knows of your generosity in adopting both homeless children -- and I'd like to tell our listeners that they are beautifully behaved.

JOAN
I feel that discipline mixed with love is such a good recipe.

INTERVIEWER
What time do you expect your youngsters will awaken tomorrow morning?

JOAN
(indulgent)
I'm afraid they are likely to be up by six-thirty at the latest.

INTERVIEWER
Will they come straight into your room and waken you?

JOAN
I'd be disappointed if they didn't! -- Christmas is our favorite day of the year.

INTERVIEWER
Christina, do you and your brother get lots of presents at Christmas time?

CHRISTINA
(perfectly memorized)
Yes, we do. Mother's fans send us so many beautiful things.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED: (2) 89

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)
But we like to share them with other boys and girls who aren't so fortunate.

INTERVIEWER
Miss Crawford, would you tell us what's to happen after we leave you tonight?

JOAN
Well, the children and I will probably just watch the Christmas tree lights for a while. Then, later, we'll welcome some of the children's friends, who'll be in to help us sing some carols.

INTERVIEWER
And then surely you finish up by reading ''Twas the Night Before Christmas'?

JOAN
Oh, no Christmas Eve would be complete without that.

INTERVIEWER
As a Christmas present to our listeners, would all of you like to say the last two lines for us?

JOAN/CHILDREN
(she leads the chorus -- all three in unison)
'And I heard him exclaim as he
drove out of sight,
Merry Christmas to all, and to
all a good night.'

INTERVIEWER
And good night to you, Miss Crawford, and thank you for allowing all of us to share your Christmas Eve.

JOAN
Thank you. And a very merry Christmas to you and all of your listeners.

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED: (3) 89

And, by God, there is so much warmth in Joan's voice as she speaks her last lines that we believe she means them with all her heart.

CUT TO:

90 INT. BRENTWOOD BAR - NIGHT 90

Christina is standing behind the bar doing her best impression of a miniature Joan, playing hostess. The object of her attentions is another NEW UNCLE, TED GELBER.

CHRISTINA
Mommie's not quite ready, Mr. Gelber. Will it be scotch and water tonight?

Ted walks to the bar.

TED
(smiling)
Please -- but easy on the scotch, honey.

Christina smiles flirtatiously. She fills the glass with scotch, a splash of water and three ice cubes.

CHRISTINA
(teasing)
But, Mr. Gelber, I fix all my 'Uncles' drinks that way.

TED
(laughing)
I... am... not your uncle!

Christina studies him for a moment, then hands him the drink.

CHRISTINA
Mommie asked that you come upstairs now.

Christina turns and begins to walk out of the room. Ted tastes his drink, makes a wry face, looks at his very strong drink then at Christina who is at the foot of the stairs, smiling. He smiles, shakes his head, and follows Christina up the stairs.

CUT TO:

91 INT. JOAN'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT 91

Joan, seated at mirrored dressing table, fully made up, is wearing a light robe, loosely wrapped, revealing her bra, panties, and garter belt. She touches perfume over her neck, shoulders and legs. SOUND OF APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS. She quickly checks her hair and makeup in the mirror, and turns with a charming smile as Christina appears in the doorway.

CHRISTINA
Mommie, Mr. Gelber is here.

Joan stands, still smiling. Christina steps aside to allow Ted to enter. He is several years Joan's junior.

JOAN
Christina, by this time you know
you can call him Uncle Ted!

CHRISTINA
Yes, Mommie Dearest.
(she smiles at him)
'Uncle Ted.'

JOAN
(her sweetest smile)
Run along now, dearest...

Christina leaves.

JOAN
(holding out her
arms, inviting
his embrace)
Ted, darling.

Joan's robe slips open further as she goes hungrily into Ted's arms.

CUT TO:

92 INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING ROOM/BAR - NIGHT 92

Christina crosses the living room and goes to bar, taking Joan's bottle of vodka and a fresh icy glass out of the refrigerator, pouring her a good strong belt. Then she smiles into the mirror, winks at herself.

CUT TO:

93 INT. JOAN'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT 93

Ted is sitting on the chair in front of the vanity table. Joan has her leg up on the edge of the table, provocatively right in front of Ted's face, as she pulls on a stocking. She pulls back the lace edge of her slip to get the black garter strap.

(CONTINUED)

93 CONTINUED: 9

She caresses her leg as she smooths the stocking. Ted is eyeing her and getting turned on, which is her intention. Ted reaches out his hand to touch her leg and Joan playfully taps it away, teasing him further. She then rolls up her other stocking and inserts her foot, pulling it slowly, sexily, onto her leg. Ted can stand it no longer, and goes down on his knees as he moves in on Joan. He begins kissing her passionately. His hand slides up her leg.

Vodka in hand, Christina arrives through the bedroom. She comes to a sudden stop, fascinated by their embrace. Joan's back is to the entry, so she doesn't see Christina arrive.

TED
We've got company.

Joan pulls away from the kiss and gets up. Joan smooths her slip, fixes a stray strand of hair. Christina is riveted by what she's seen.

CHRISTINA
(graciously)
I brought you a freshener, Mommie dearest.

JOAN
Looks like my baby is growing up.

CUT TO:

94 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - PALOS VERDES - RUNNING SHOT - DAY 94

Giant eucalyptus trees line the side of the road. Joan's car WHIZZES BY, and we CUT INSIDE to find Joan and Christina both dressed for an occasion.

JOAN
Tina, I am your mother and you are my child. I do know what's best for you.

CHRISTINA
(mounting panic)
Whatever I did, I won't do it again. I promise. I can be better. I promised God last night when I said my prayers -- I told him I'd be good and that I'd blow him a thousand kisses if I didn't have to go. I can be better.
(a beat; desperate)
Please tell me what I should do.

CUT TO:

95 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - PALOS VERDES - DAY 95

Joan's car turns into a blacktop driveway. Beside the driveway we see a sign reading: "CHADWICK COUNTRY BOARDING SCHOOL."

JOAN (V.O.)
(brightly to Christina)
You'll see, darling, the time will fly by. You can call me collect any time.

CUT TO:

96 EXT. CHADWICK SCHOOL - DAY 96

The car pulls up in the circular drive and MRS. CHADWICK, the headmistress, comes out to greet them. She is fiftyish, with a kind face and a splendid posture. Joan and Christina get out of the car. Christina looks at her mother pleadingly, tears in her eyes. Joan gives her a reprimanding stare and moves to Mrs. Chadwick.

She shakes Mrs. Chadwick's hand and pours on the honey.

JOAN
How kind of you to greet us, Mrs. Chadwick.

Christina stares at Mrs. Chadwick with a nervous, pained expression.

MRS. CHADWICK
I know you'll be happy here, Christina.

CHRISTINA
(earnestly)
I won't. Please don't make me stay.
(to Joan)
I don't want to leave home.

Mrs. Chadwick looks surprised and concerned. She puts her hand comfortingly on Christina's shoulder, then glances questioningly at Joan. Joan shrugs it off with a firm smile.

JOAN
Just last minute jitters.
(back to Tina)
You'll see how lucky you are to be at this lovely school.

Joan kisses Christina on the forehead and shakes Mrs. Chadwick's hand.

CHRISTINA
Please, Mommie, don't leave me here.

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED: 96

JOAN
That's enough nonsense, young lady... what will Mrs. Chadwick think?

MRS. CHADWICK
I'm sure everything will be fine once you settle in.

Joan gets into the car and waves gaily. Christina stares mournfully at the car as it goes down the long drive. Mrs. Chadwick puts her arm around Christina and walks her towards the main door.

MRS. CHADWICK
(continuing)
I know just how you feel.

Christina looks up at Mrs. Chadwick in surprise, unprepared for empathy from an adult.

CUT TO:

97 INT. CHADWICK SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY 97

Four years have passed. We COME IN on a new Christina. She has matured and developed into an attractive young teenager. At the moment she is on the stage alone. She is reciting a monologue for her acting class. The other kids are sprawled on seats in the dark auditorium. As Tina recites, CAMERA PANS their faces. They are all fixed on Christina. She is quite good.

CHRISTINA
(in character)
'Understand! The first word I ever heard out of any of you was that word "understand." Why didn't I "understand" that I must not play with water -- cold, black, beautiful flowing water -- because I'd spill it on the palace tiles. Understand! I don't want to understand. There'll be time enough to understand when I'm old... If I ever am old. But now now -- '

Christina pauses when she finishes. The auditorium has been totally quiet. The other students now break into applause. Christina comes down from the stage, pleased but slightly embarrassed by their enthusiasm. TONY and VERA, two of the students, are holding hands.

TONY
Great, Christina.

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED: 97

CHRISTINA
Thanks, Tony.

VERA
What play is that?

CHRISTINA
'Antigone.' It's a Greek myth, written by a French playwright.

TONY
Can I have your autograph when you're a movie star?

He is teasing, and Christina gives him a playful, flirtatious punch on the arm.

CUT TO:

98 INT. CHASEN'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT 98

Joan and Christina are in Joan's booth. Joan's eyes constantly rove the restaurant, even when she's speaking to Christina. Christina is uptight, afraid to do or say anything that will provoke her mother. Joan finishes several vodkas during the scene.

JOAN
Do sit up properly, Christina. Isn't this fun, us having a date when you come home for the weekend?

Christina straightens her shoulders and sits up taller. She breaks off a piece of bread, butters it carefully and puts it daintily into her mouth. Joan's attention is on some people who have just come into the restaurant.

JOAN
(continuing)
Look who's here: after all those face lifts I didn't know she could move her mouth enough to chew. And her bastard husband.

Joan motions for the CAPTAIN, who brings menus. Joan takes hers and continues looking at the doorway. The Captain smiles at Christina as he hands her the menu. She timidly returns his smile. Joan looks over and sees this.

JOAN
(continuing)
Don't flirt, Christina.

Christina blushes bright red and looks down at her menu mortified. Joan hands her menu back to the Captain with a gracious smile.

98 CONTINUED: 98

JOAN
(continuing)
We'll have the Hobo Steak for two; rare.

Christina looks up at the mention of rare meat. She looks at the Captain writing down the order. She considers whether to say anything, but stays silent.

JOAN
(continuing)
And two limestone salads.

The Captain leaves.

JOAN
(continuing)
Flirting can be taken the wrong way. Besides, we do not socialize with those who serve us.

Christina takes a report card out of her purse.

CHRISTINA
I want you to see this. I got all A's and one B.

Joan glances at the report card, puts it down.

JOAN
I'm very proud of you, dear -- What about your Christmas card list?

CHRISTINA
I've had exams, Mommie. I'll get my cards out on time. I'm not a baby anymore.

JOAN
Sometimes I wish you still were a baby: not a moment's trouble. So obedient. Being away at school has made you rebellious. Perhaps you'd be better off at home.

Christina looks panicked at the idea of being taken out of school.

CHRISTINA
I'm sorry. I've had a lot of schoolwork.

JOAN
I work like an ox to send you to a good school.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOAN (CONT'D)
Times are damn tough and I still treat you to a lovely evening like this and what do I get? Smart-aleck backtalk.

Christina swallows her inclination to defend herself. She musters a smile.

CHRISTINA
I'm sorry, Mommie dearest. I'll try to be better.

JOAN
We'll see, dear. Now let's enjoy dinner.

CUT TO:

99 INT. CRAWFORD BASEMENT LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY 99

Christina finishes putting the clothes into a front-loading washing machine. She closes the door and starts the machine. In the b.g. Joan is coming down the stairs. She stops at the bottom and watches Christina. Christina, unaware of Joan, carries the empty basket to a second machine and begins to take out the finished wet laundry.

JOAN
Tina?

CHRISTINA
You scared me!

JOAN
Sorry...

Joan walks over to a table near her daughter and beings, absentmindedly folding several towels from a large dry pile.

JOAN
There's a problem we have to talk about...

CHRISTINA
What did I do?

(CONTINUED)

JOAN
No. No. It's not you, dear...
I'm having some financial
difficulties. I let the extra
help go... I just spoke with the
Chadwicks about your tuition...
They've agreed to let you go on
a work/scholarship program.

Finding it tough to continue the conversation, Joan fingers the edge of a folded towel.

CHRISTINA
(moving to her mother)
That's alright... we'll make out...

JOAN
(almost to herself)
I had to work my way through
school... scrubbing floors and...
(to Christina)
It'll do you good to learn the
value of work early...
(sits on a nearby
stool, leaning her
elbows on the table)
But there's something else...

Joan takes a deep breath, runs her hands over her face, her forehead, through her now short hair. Suddenly, unexpectedly, she begins to cry.

CHRISTINA
What is it, Mommie?

JOAN
(fighting sobs)
You're going to have to be my
brave girl when I tell you this...
I lost my contract at Warners.
For the first time in twenty-
seven years I'm on my own... no
studio... no contract... no
money... nobody to... I've never
been so alone.

Christina reaches out to Joan and cradles her in her arms, holding her, rocking her gently.

CHRISTINA
I'm here, Mommie... it's going to
be alright. I'll help you.

99 CONTINUED: (2) 99

JOAN
(very quietly)
I'm scared, Tina... I'm really scared... I didn't think this could happen... to me... What am I going to do?! After all these years... I can't...

CHRISTINA
(in tears)
Ssshhh... ssshhh. It'll be okay... We'll manage... there now... there now... I love you, Mommie... I *love you*...

CUT TO:

100 INT. BAR - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 100

Christina's finishing cleaning up after a party. She empties ashtrays, rinses glasses behind the bar. She sighs with exhaustion, and exits up the staircase.

CUT TO:

101 INT. JOAN'S BEDROOM/DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT 101

Christina enters the dressing room. She looks around, seeing the room disheveled, clothes scattered, dressing table spread with cosmetics. Standing at the open door, she knocks on the door. No answer. Every light in the room is on.

CHRISTINA
(calling out)
Mommie...

She waits, then enters the room slowly.

CHRISTINA
(continuing)
Mommie? I came up to say goodnight ... Mommie?

Concerned, she walks further into the room, seeing no one. She moves slowly towards Joan's bedroom.

CHRISTINA
(continuing; scared)
Mommie...?

(CONTINUED)

101 CONTINUED: 101

Not a sound, no reply. Christina walks into the bedroom. Joan is sprawled, face down, on the carpet. Christina rushes to Joan, turns her over, and shakes her. No response. Christina listens for heartbeat.

CHRISTINA
My God...!
(calling out)
Carol Ann!

She rushes out to the landing.

CHRISTINA
(continuing)
Carol Ann...! Help...

CAROL ANN
(coming up the stairs)
What is it?

CHRISTINA
Something's happened! Hurry!

CUT TO:

102 INT. JOAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 102

Christina comes through the open doorway to her mother's side, kneeling. Carol Ann follows through the door. She does not hurry, or seem ruffled.

CHRISTINA
(distressed)
... She's sick... I found her just like this...

Carol Ann looks down at the unconscious Joan without emotion.

CHRISTINA
(continuing)
Carol Ann... She needs help!
Call the doctor!

CAROL ANN
She doesn't need a doctor. She's drunk.

CHRISTINA
Drunk...? No... Are you sure?

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED: 102

CAROL ANN
I'm sure, Christina... believe me, it's not the first time.

CHRISTINA
Why didn't you tell me...? I could've helped...

Christina sits for a moment to let this sink in. Then she looks up and for the first time notices that Joan's bedroom is filled to overflowing with what are obviously an extensive series of department store purchases. There are dress boxes, some opened with new dresses spilling out, others still unopened, etc.

There is a new fur coat on the bed, still with the tags on in amidst the wrappings. There are perhaps a dozen shoe boxes on the bed with new shoes inside.

CHRISTINA
(continuing; shaking her head and moving to touch the new purchases)
When did she buy all these?

CAROL ANN
Two days ago. They came this afternoon.

CHRISTINA
I thought we were broke!

CAROL ANN
She's very frightened. Let's put her to bed.

Christina nods sadly. Carol Ann gets a grip under Joan's arms. Christina takes Joan's feet and they carry Joan to her bed, placing her on it.

CAROL ANN
(continuing)
I'm sorry it has to be like this... for you and for her.

Christina nods sadly. Carol Ann leaves as Christina covers Joan with a light comforter. She arranges a pillow under Joan's head. She sits next to Joan on the bed and gently smooths back a strand of her mother's hair.

CUT TO:

103 EXT. CHADWICK RIDING STABLES - DAY 103

Tony, Janice and Vera gallop their horses out of a riding path to the stable. *Christina dressed in work* clothes is mucking out a stall. The two girls dismount and toss their horses reins to Christina. Giggling, they move away from the action. Tony dismounts more slowly and offers Christina a long appreciative look. She smiles back flirtatiously.

* CHRISTINA *
You sure have mastered that horse, Tony. She responds to your slightest touch.

TONY
She's just a great horse. Want to ride her?

CHRISTINA
When?

TONY
When would you like to?

CHRISTINA
Well I *work and study all day.*

TONY
How about tonight?

CHRISTINA
What about Vera?

TONY
She's just a friend.

CHRISTINA
Eight-thirty tonight.

TONY
Right here.

CUT TO:

104 EXT. STABLES - NIGHT 104

The moon is full as Tony and Christina walk slowly away from the stables.

CUT TO:

104 CONTINUED:

EXT. GRASSY SPOT NEAR HORSE CORRAL

Christina and Tony sit side by side in silence. He kisses her lightly on the mouth. He kisses her again, a bit more seriously, her arms go around him and she kisses him back.

* CHRISTINA *
(giggles)
My first kiss.

TONY
I'll bet.

CHRISTINA
(coyly)
Well, almost.

TONY
You kiss great.

Tony makes an affirmative sound and gently pulls her down on him. His hands start to roam over her body. Christina doesn't seem really to notice.

Christina and Tony are entwined in a passionate embrace. He gently moves to lie on top of her. Suddenly a shrill VOICE breaks their lovemaking.

VERA
Great!
(a beat)
This is real great!

TONY
Vera!

VERA
(vicious)
I'm going to tell. I am.
(starts away)
I'm going to tell.

CUT TO:

105 INT. MRS. CHADWICK'S OFFICE - DAY 105

Joan is pacing and smoking, in a rage. Mrs. Chadwick is behind her desk and Christina is on the couch, silent and forlorn.

JOAN
(to Christina)
How could you humiliate me like this? I'm ashamed to be the mother of... I can't even think of the word!
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOAN (CONT'D)
(to Mrs. Chadwick)
How could you let this happen!

MRS. CHADWICK
I understand your concern, Miss Crawford. Both students have been put on probation and will have no privileges for a month.

JOAN
Probation! This is appalling! I've devoted myself to making Christina a proper young lady. That boy should be expelled!

MRS. CHADWICK
Now, Miss Crawford. When this sort of thing has happened before we have found...

JOAN
(interrupting, shouting)
Before?! Is this an institution of learning or a teenage brothel? I've paid a fortune so my daughter can get a diploma for screwing?

MRS. CHADWICK
(stung, she comes back strong)
Chadwick has an impeccable reputation and -- when students break the rules we curtail their freedom.

JOAN
(toe to toe with Mrs. Chadwick)
We're leaving here right now. Obviously she can't be controlled in this environment.

Christina fights panic and tears. Mrs. Chadwick continues to struggle to control her temper and reason with Joan.

MRS. CHADWICK
Nothing really happened between your daughter and the young man. It was innocent. I think you're over-reacting, Miss Crawford.

105 CONTINUED: (2) 105

JOAN
And I think you're under-reacting, Madam!

Joan grabs Christina by the hand, jerks her to her feet, and propels her towards the door. Christina looks pleadingly at Mrs. Chadwick.

JOAN
(continuing)
My compliments to your school on its 'impeccable reputation.'

CUT TO:

106 INT. JOAN'S CAR - DAY (IMMEDIATELY AFTER) 106

Joan grips the wheel as she drives out of the school gates. She fumbles in her purse for her silver flask. She shakes it and throws it on the floor when she finds it empty. Christina sits like a statue on the front seat next to her.

JOAN
Where the hell can I get some vodka around here?

CHRISTINA
There's a liquor store to the right.

JOAN
I should have known you'd know where to find the boys and the booze.

Joan hits the accelerator pedal, and the car lurches forward with a SQUEAL OF TIRES.

CUT TO:

107 EXT. JOAN'S BRENTWOOD DRIVEWAY - NIGHT 107

Joan's car pulls to a quick stop.

JOAN
Barbara Bennett's here from New York doing a cover story on me for Redbook. I don't want any trouble from you. Don't give me any shit in front of the reporter.

CUT TO:

108 INT. THE BREAKFAST ROOM - NIGHT 108

As Joan enters, BARBARA BENNETT looks up from the typewriter. She is Joan's age, but looks ten years older. Her figure is plump and her hair, touched with gray, is fixed haphazardly.

BARBARA
(indicating typed pages)
You're going to love this.
(gestures a headline in the air)
Movie Star Manages to Have it All -- Career, Home and Family.

JOAN
(all smiles)
Wonderful. Let's see.

As Joan picks up the typed pages and starts to read, Christina enters.

BARBARA
My God! Christina? It can't be. Last time I saw you, you were four.
(lays a hand on top of her head; mock dismay)
Oh, my poor old gray head!

CHRISTINA
How are you, Miss Bennett?

BARBARA
God, call me Barbara.

A beat: what else do you say to a fourteen-year-old you haven't seen for ten years?

BARBARA
(continuing)
How do you like school?

CHRISTINA
Very much.

JOAN
She got expelled.

Dead silence. Barbara looks puzzled, and Christina is open-mouthed with indignation.

CHRISTINA
That's a lie!

JOAN
(icy)
I want to talk to you in the other room, Christina.

CUT TO:

109 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 109

Joan strides through the door, closely followed by Christina. Joan leads the way into the den so they can't be heard.

CUT TO:

110 INT. BAR AREA - NIGHT 110

As soon as both of them are in the room, Joan whirls to face her daughter. Joan is furious, but this time Christina is equally furious, and she stands face to face with Joan.

JOAN
(full throttle)
Why do you deliberately defy me?

CHRISTINA
(just as strong)
Why did you tell her I got expelled?

JOAN
You did get expelled.

CHRISTINA
(even)
That's a lie.

Joan slaps her across the face. Christina doesn't move -- doesn't dodge, doesn't cower, doesn't even blink. She just stands looking at her mother, and the look says, "I see you, and I know what you are." This is a confrontation, and for the first time we realize that Christina is looking eye to eye with her mother -- in fact, Christina is a bit taller than Joan.

Enraged by this new attitude, Joan slaps Christina again, harder. Tina will not flinch.

JOAN
(a third slap, even harder; she begins to scream)
You love it, don't you? You just LOVE to make me hit you!

Barbara Bennett appears in the doorway, shocked at what's going on. Joan whirls on her, rudely.

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED: 110

JOAN
(continuing)
Barbara, you know how to get to your room. If you need anything, ask Carol Ann.

Barbara leaves. Joan begins to pace the room.

JOAN
(continuing)
This is wonderful, ab-so-lutely wonderful... you embarrass me in front of a reporter, and you...

CHRISTINA
(calm)
Why did you adopt me?

JOAN
(taken aback)
What?

CHRISTINA
Why did you adopt me?

JOAN
(movie star diction)
... because I wanted to open my home to unfortunate children. Because I wanted someone to love.

CHRISTINA
Don't *act* for me. I want to know: *why did you adopt me*?

JOAN
(trying to wound)
Perhaps I did it for a little extra *publicity*.
(quick; she means it)
Oh, that's not true. Really, it's not true.

CHRISTINA
Maybe just a little true?

JOAN
(looks up to the ceiling; a helpless gesture)
Well, I give up -- I don't know what to do with you.

CHRISTINA

Why not?

Joan's head snaps around in rage, and she moves nearer to Christina.

JOAN

I don't ask much from you, girl. Why can't you give me the simple respect I'm entitled to? Why can't you treat me the way I'd get treated by any stranger on the street?

CHRISTINA

(strongest so far)

Because I'm NOT ONE OF YOUR FANS!

Joan's entire body recoils for a moment, then she lunges forward, her face murderous. She grabs Christina by the throat, and they both go down, knocking over a lamp and a table as they fall. The shade rolls off the lamp as it hits the floor, and the scene is lit with a weird, bright light from the naked bulb.

Joan is completely out of control -- she sits on top of Christina, pressing her thumbs into her throat.

JOAN

BASTARD! Damn you! BASTARD!

Christina tries to fight back, to get away, but she is no match for Joan, and it is clear that Christina is in great danger. Finally, Christina twists out from under her mother, wedges her knee between Joan's body and her own, and pushes Joan away, loosening her grip.

Joan releases one hand and hits Christina backhand across the mouth, cutting her lip with a large ring.

JOAN

(continuing)

Ungrateful BASTARD!

Joan goes down again on top of Christina. This time we really think she will kill her daughter. When Christina is purple from lack of air, the door bursts open and Carol Ann rushes in followed by Barbara Bennett.

(CONTINUED)

CAROL ANN/BARBARA
(AD LIB as they
pull at Joan)
My God! Joan! You'll kill her!
Stop it!

But Joan won't let go. Finally both women give a tremendous pull, and drag her away. Joan's screaming turns to weeping that is touched with hysteria.

BARBARA
Stop it, Joan -- Christina's hurt.

Carol Ann checks Christina to see if she is all right, then helps the bruised and bleeding girl to a chair. Christina rubs her throat, then gingerly touches her cut lips. When Joan speaks, she is again in total command of herself.

JOAN
(to Christina)
Go to your room.

When Christina doesn't move.

JOAN
(continuing)
Now.

Christina stands up, looking at Joan with true hate. Joan turns her back. Christina leaves the room.

CUT TO:

111 INT. MOTHER SUPERIOR'S OFFICE - THE FLINTRIDGE ACADEMY - MORNING 111

Christina sits on a stiff-backed chair in front of a stiff-backed nun, the MOTHER SUPERIOR, a formidable woman. Her office, like all the school buildings, is solid stone. It seems like a dungeon. Christina's school uniform is rather like a novitiate nun's costume. She is in a trance-like state, staring dully at this pious woman.

MOTHER SUPERIOR
Dear Christina, God has brought
you to our convent school so that
you can see the error of your ways.
(MORE)

111 CONTINUED: 111

MOTHER SUPERIOR (CONT'D)
You've sinned in the past, transgressed against the Holy Commandments, but you shall find forgiveness and be cleansed. Those who seek shall receive. Let us pray together for your repentence, that the good Lord will grace you with His comfort and guidance.

The Mother Superior gets up from behind her desk and kneels on the single pew underneath her window. Christina gets up, robot-like, and kneels beside her. The light streams in on them. The Mother Superior bows her head and concentrates on her prayer. Christina stares blankly out the window, all life gone from her eyes.

CUT TO:

112 INT. LAS VEGAS HOTEL SUITE - DAY 112

Forty to fifty people at party. Champagne cork pops. CLOSEUP champagne bottle bubbling over, glasses being filled.

A HAPPY GUEST (V.O.)
To Joan and Alfred... a long and happy marriage!

MANY MEN AND WOMEN
Cheers!... Congratulations... All happiness...

CLOSEUP two champagne glasses toast. Bright flash-bulb goes off. Joan is kissing a crew-cut, gray-haired man, ALFRED STEELE. She's in a pink suit with matching hat and gaudy costume jewelry. He's dressed in business suit and wears glasses. They're both very happy amid the festive atmosphere of this expensive party. The tables are laden with food, liquor and champagne, flowers everywhere, waiters attending to everyone's needs.

PHOTOGRAPHER
(while Joan and Al kiss)
Hold it!...
(b.g. laughter)
That's great!

Flash goes off.

(CONTINUED)

112 CONTINUED: 112

JOAN
Alfred, darling, I'm so happy!

MALE GUEST
Speech... Speech!...

AL
Thank you all for being here on such short notice.
(scattered crowd laughter)
... If this marriage has come as a surprise to some of you... just think how I felt when Joan said 'yes.'

More laughter as Al lifts his glass in a toast to Joan.

JOAN
A few minutes ago, a reporter asked me how I would describe the marriage of the 'Soft Drink King' to the 'Queen of Hollywood.'
(smiling adoringly at Al)
I told him I thought it was a hell of a team!

Applause. Photographers flash pictures from every angle as reporters write furiously in their notebooks. A WOMAN hugs Joan.

WOMAN
Joan, dearest... I know you're going to be so happy!

A MAN slaps Al on the back.

MAN
You old scoundrel!

Carol Ann scurries through the crowd to Joan and whispers in her ear.

JOAN
(to Al)
Excuse me, darling.

Al smiles at her and nods as Joan goes to an adjoining room.

CUT TO:

113 INT. LAS VEGAS HOTEL SUITE BEDROOM - DAY 113

Joan closes the door, shutting off the party. Her smile and gracious manner are gone. She walks over and picks up the telephone receiver.

JOAN

Yes? Hello, dear. What took you so long to call? So what if you hear about it on the radio?... Christina, all you had to do was call Las Vegas. It's very simple, any operator would have been able to locate me. Obviously, you didn't try very hard. Hundreds of other people have found us!

(listens)

Thank you, Christina... we will be gloriously happy.

Joan hangs up on Christina, takes a deep breath, resumes her gracious, happy bride smile, turns to leave the room.

CUT TO:

114 EXT. CONVENT SCHOOL ENTRANCE - DAY 114

Mother Superior is smiling an affectionate farewell. Christina's suitcase is on the steps next to her. She wears a simple civilian dress.

CHRISTINA

Thank you, Mother. You've been so good to me... These years have been lonely... but I've learned a valuable lesson...

(smiles shyly)

... patience.

(she embraces
Mother Superior)

I'll write, I promise.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Goodbye, dear child. God be with you.

Christina picks up her suitcase, hurries down the long stairs without looking back.

CUT TO:

115 EXT. CRAWFORD MANSION DRIVEWAY - FRONT ENTRANCE - DAY 115

Limousine pulls in, stops. Chauffeur gets out, starts to go to the right rear door. Before he gets there, Christina opens the door, gets out with her suitcase which he tries to take from her.

CHRISTINA
No, thanks, I can manage.

She starts up the walk towards the front door, enters the house.

116 INT. HOUSE 116

Stops, and walks slowly through the house, looking around at each familiar object.

117 EXT. CRAWFORD BACK YARD - DAY 117

The back yard pool and grounds look the same as in earlier scenes. Only the people have aged. Al Steele is swimming laps slowly in the pool. Joan is sitting on the patio talking on the phone. Christina moves onto the terrace and stands watching her mother.

JOAN
(into phone)
... I'll miss you too, darling, but you get to New York so often, we'll see each other then.
(listens)
Yes, I've put the house up for sale. Alfred travels so much and corporate headquarters are in New York... it only makes sense.

She laughs. Christina listens, looking out with curiosity at the man in swimming pool. Joan glances up, realizes Christina's arrived.

JOAN
(continuing;
into phone)
My daughter's here. Talk to you before we leave.
(listens)
Love to you, too!

Hangs up.

(CONTINUED)

117 CONTINUED: 117

CHRISTINA
Hello, Mother.

JOAN
Darling!

Joan stands and moves to Christina and embraces her briefly.

JOAN
(continuing)
You've grown... taller. I *want* you to meet my husband.

CHRISTINA
What do I call him?

JOAN
(surprised)
What would you call anyone who is your father?
(Joan gazes at the man in the pool)
He's too fat, wears glasses, and he's slightly hard of hearing in one ear. But he's a wonderful man. He's somebody! Go introduce yourself.

Christina hesitates, then walks across the yard to the pool. In the b.g. Joan stands on the patio watching. Al Steele swims toward Christina, a smile on his face. Christina kneels and extends her hand which Al shakes.

CHRISTINA
(softly)
Hello... Daddy. I'm Christina.

CUT TO:

118 INT. UNFURNISHED APARTMENT - DAY 118

We're in New York, in what must be one of the biggest apartments in the world. The walls from eighteen normal-sized rooms have been torn out to make eight huge rooms. We see workmen in white overalls everywhere, a harried DECORATOR, etc.

Joan, Alfred Steele and Christina enter the apartment. The Decorator rushes to Joan.

(CONTINUED)

DECORATOR
I don't know what to do -- that
retaining wall is really blocking
the view!

JOAN
Tear out the frigging wall and
put the window where it belongs.

Christina laughs. The Decorator looks at Steele, who shrugs. CAMERA TRACKS the three as Joan points out various features of the room.

JOAN
(continuing; she
laughs)
... so let's sit in the den a
while.

The three perch on construction crates and boxes.

JOAN
(continuing)
Well, Tina. What are you up to?

CHRISTINA
I've been acting.

Joan pretends not to understand.

JOAN
Acting like what?

CHRISTINA
Like an actress. Mostly in stock.
I think I may be pretty good.

JOAN
(condescending)
Good luck, darling.

CHRISTINA
I'm working at night, so I can go
on interviews during the day. The
thing is...
(it's hard for her)
... I don't like to ask, but I
wondered if you could lend me --

JOAN
Not a cent.
(MORE)

118 CONTINUED: (2) 118

JOAN (CONT'D)
You may be an actress for all I know, but you can do it like I did -- on your own; starve and cuss and kiss every ass you see, but do it on your own.
(a beat)
Besides, we can't afford it.

AL
Oh, Joan, come on. A little something.

Joan gives him a look that silences him.

JOAN
Doing things on your own is best. You agree, don't you, Christina?

CHRISTINA
(smiles; what else can she say)
Sure.

119 INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY (A BIT LATER) 119

Christina is waiting for the elevator. Steele moves quickly to her and presses two hundred dollars into her hand.

AL
Between us.

CHRISTINA
(on tiptoes, furtively kisses Al on the cheek)
Thanks, Daddy.

CUT TO:

120 INT. UNFURNISHED APARTMENT - DAY 120

Al re-enters and thoughtfully goes to Joan, who is studying blueprints.

AL
I hate to bring this up, but we've got to cut back on our spending.

JOAN
(angrily)
What are you talking about? I'm doing everything for you. I'm working my ass off to turn this into your showplace.

(CONTINUED)

120 CONTINUED: 120

AL
You're doing a marvelous job, but we've got to economize.

JOAN
(blows up)
Economize! I've lived a certain way all my life. I'm not going back down the ladder just because you want to *pinch pennies! Most* of our expenses are for your company. I have to look great for Pepsi-Cola.

AL
I want you to look great and I want us to live well, but there's a limit. We're going into debt.

JOAN
You're going into debt. You're the businessman, Alfred Steele, I'm the star! You wanted a movie star to trot around for your goddamned soda pop, well, you've got to pay the price.

AL
Be reasonable, Joan. I've given you everything you've wanted. Just look at this joint.

JOAN
You're the genius of the soft drink world. Get the goddamned company to pay the bills. Without me, Pepsi couldn't get the time of day.

AL
Joan, you've got to understand. It's a public company, for chrissake. This isn't Hollywood, where someone 'takes care of things' with a phone call. This is the real world.

JOAN
I have a public; they expect me to live a certain way.

AL
And that way is breaking my back.

(CONTINUED)

JOAN
You should have thought of all this before. Why should I suffer because you didn't plan things well? You'll find a solution, Al. You love challenges.

CUT TO:

121 INT. PEPSI BOARD ROOM - DAY 121

Joan, dressed in black with a black-veiled hat, sits at one end of a long board room table. On both sides of the gleaming mahogany table is a line of TWELVE EXECUTIVES, the board of directors of Pepsi-Cola. Joan's manner is that of the *suffering, saintly* widow; they treat her accordingly.

EXECUTIVE #1
The condolences of every person at Pepsi-Cola are with you.

EXECUTIVE #2
Al Steele helped make this company.

EXECUTIVE #1
And you were right by his side, sharing the burdens and joy.

Joan bows her head, nodding and fighting tears. There is a beat as the men look at her with sympathetic concern.

EXECUTIVE #3
And we want to give you ample time to repay the debt. Plenty of time.

Joan's head snaps up out of its mourning pose. She fixes the man with a cold stare. His tone remains cool, aloof, oily.

EXECUTIVE #3
(continuing)
Of course we'll have to take the Fifth Avenue apartment, but you probably wouldn't want to stay there alone anyway.

Joan looks at each of the men slowly. A snarling smile begins to form as she swivels her head to include each of them.

(CONTINUED)

121 CONTINUED: 121

She conducts herself like a reigning mobster being challenged by lesser mafiosi.

JOAN
(calm)
What debt? I've got a hundred thousand shares of stock.

EXECUTIVE #4
(referring to papers)
Your husband borrowed against the stock to pay for the construction on your apartment.

EXECUTIVE #2
And we loaned him a considerable sum in addition to meet expenses his salary didn't cover.

Joan laughs out loud, a harsh mocking laugh.

JOAN
You think you're so clever, trying to sweep the poor little widow under the carpet? Think again; I'm on the board of directors of this lousy company.

Joan smiles arrogantly at them. They look back at her unperturbed, no emotions visible. Her anger builds throughout.

EXECUTIVE #4
We assumed that with your husband gone you'd no longer want to be on the board.

JOAN
Bullshit. I've given years of my life for this company and I intend to stay with it.

EXECUTIVE #1
We appreciate your devotion and contribution, Miss Crawford, but we have retired you from the board of directors.

JOAN
You two-bit sons of bitches; you drove Al Steele to his grave and now you're going to stab me in the back? Forget it.
(MORE)

121 CONTINUED: (2) 121

JOAN (CONT'D)
I fought monsters worse than you years ago in Hollywood. I learned how to win the hard way.

EXECUTIVE #3
(placating)
Miss Crawford, we don't want any hard feelings, and of course...

JOAN
(interrupting)
You don't know what 'hard feelings' are until you see how few people in America will drink that shit of yours when I come out against it.

EXECUTIVE #3
(placating)
Please, Miss Crawford, it's hardly necessary to make threats you surely don't mean.

JOAN
Don't fuck with me, fellas. This ain't my first time at the rodeo. You forget that the press I delivered to Pepsi was my power. I can use it any way I want. It's a sword that cuts both ways, you could say.

The men all look nervously at each other.

THE CHAIRMAN
(speaks for the first time)
We didn't realize the extent to which you were interested in the company, apart from Al's position. We misjudged. We shall be pleased to have you stay on.

Joan smiles at him. She includes the others in her smirk.

JOAN
Thank you. I feel better already.

CLOSEUP on Joan smiling malevolently, feeling her power.

CUT TO:

122 EXT. NEW YORK CITY - WEST 84TH STREET - DAY 122

A 1968 vintage New York taxi is slowly moving down the street looking for a correct address. It stops in front of a fairly shabby brownstone walkup. Joan, looking considerably older, exits the taxi and goes inside the building. We see her checking mailboxes for Christina's apartment.

CUT TO:

123 INT. CHRISTINA'S APARTMENT - DAY 123

Spartan, neat, working girl's lifestyle. Christina is preparing a light salad in her kitchen. She hears the BUZZER.

CHRISTINA
Coming. I'm coming.

She crosses to the door which opens directly into her living room. She opens the door and finds Joan.

CHRISTINA
(continuing)
Mommie!

Joan enters, looks around.

JOAN
I happened to be in the neighborhood.

CHRISTINA
Oh, Mommie. I wish I'd known you were coming. I would have straightened up.

JOAN
(graciously)
It looks quite neat to me.

She glances around the tiny apartment. She sits in a chair, enjoying a little nostalgia.

JOAN
(continuing)
Jesus Christ. I forgot what it was like. How are you, Tina?

CHRISTINA
I've been making rounds.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)
And making rounds. I've had lots of turndowns and lots of rejections -- but I'm up for a part.

JOAN
Good!

CHRISTINA
It's a soap opera.

Joan opens her purse and removes a stunning silver flask with a jeweled Pepsi symbol on it and pours herself a shot of vodka. As she sips, she shows Christina the flask.

JOAN
I got it from Batista himself when I opened the plant outside Havana. Not bad, huh?

CHRISTINA
It's lovely, Mommie.

JOAN
Cheap bastards.

CHRISTINA
Do you miss all that?

JOAN
Yeah. Sometimes.
(a new beat)
So! What about the guys?

CHRISTINA
Guys are guys. It hasn't changed.

Joan again opens her purse, taking out an elegant black jeweler's box.

JOAN
I brought you a gift.

Christina is astonished. She takes the box from Joan and opens it. It's a beautiful strand of pearls. Christina is very moved.

CHRISTINA
They're lovely. Thank you, Mommie dearest...

123 CONTINUED: (2) 123

JOAN

It was the first thing I got from Al. I want you to have them.

A long beat. Joan again looks around the apartment.

JOAN

(continuing; gestures to the pearls)

And, Tina -- if you don't get the part -- for Chrissakes, don't hock 'em!

Christina and Joan laugh at this line. Christina embraces her mother.

CUT TO:

124 INT. JOAN'S SMALLER APARTMENT - AFTERNOON 124

Joan has moved into a modest 4½ room conventional Manhattan high-rise apartment. As we come in, Joan is nicely dressed, fully made up, sitting at her dining room table with the now omnipresent glass of vodka at her side. The faithful Carol Ann is organizing piles of publicity head shots of Joan on the table, and has lists of names, stamps, sponges and envelopes laid out. Joan is signing her name (that same old "Yours always -- Joan Crawford") to each photograph, then passing it along to Carol Ann. Joan is fully concentrated, taking her task more seriously. She reaches the bottom of the pile, takes a sip from her drink and looks up.

JOAN

Is it four o'clock?

CAROL ANN

Five after.

JOAN

(nodding at small portable television set on sideboard)

Five after... turn it on!

Carol Ann does so. While she waits impatiently, Joan pours herself another drink and begins to pace, muttering to herself.

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED: 124

JOAN
(continuing)
Five minutes late! I want that
set on every day at four sharp!

Joan strides over to the television set and adjusts it herself, attempting to hurry the image into life.

* SOAP OPERA DIALOGUE for use *in SC. 125 & 126 during* *
which Joan and Carol Ann watch Christina perform on their own television set in Joan's apartment.

JANET
(Christina in character)
I'm going to try to make
him happy...in every way.

SUSAN
You two make a lovely couple.

JANET
(Christina in character)
I want so much to be a good wife.

SUSAN
You will be.

JANET
(Christina in character)
But there is so much to learn.

SUSAN
Don't worry -- love conquers
all, right?

JANET
(Christina in character)
You're so good to me, Susan -- so
understanding, I'm so glad to have
you as my friend...and maid of
honor!

SUSAN
You don't need to thank me. I
wish you all the happiness that
God can bestow.

JANET
(Christina in character)
There are so many things to do
for the wedding!

SUSAN
Millions, I'm sure -- and your
mother -- how is she doing?

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED: 124

JANET
(Christina in character)
You know mom, been secretly
planning this for years!

SUSAN
You're in good hands then.

JANET
(Christina in character)
The best -- but *sometimes I feel*
it's her wedding. But Bruce is
being so good, even though I know
he feels so removed from all the
planning. *

125 ANGLE 125

Finally the image resolves and we COME IN on typical scene from an afternoon soap opera, The Secret Storm. *Christina* is prominently featured playing the young leading woman.

126 JOAN 126

every critical faculty alert, retreats to her chair at the dining room table and sits, forgetting her drink as she scrutinizes and *evaluates Christina's performance.* Actually, Christina's work on the soap is quite acceptable. She appears attractive, composed and her talents are certainly up to the demands made. We have a sense of Joan examining Christina's work as carefully and intensely as she would have evaluated her own, years ago. Also there's a mixture of pride and envy as Joan watches her daughter in the spotlight. After a suitably turgid climax on the soap, there's a commercial break.

CAROL ANN
She's doing well, don't you think?

JOAN
Improving.

CAROL ANN
(holding some letters)
A lot of fans have written about
how impressed they are with
Christina -- and how proud you
must be of her acting.

JOAN
Something had to rub off. Now
hand me some more of those 8 x 10's.

127 INT. CHRISTINA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT 127

In the midst of eating dinner, she suddenly stops quickly, frowns, and touches her abdomen with the tips of her fingers. She is perspiring -- has a stab of pain -- she moves to the telephone and manages to dial.

CUT TO:

CHRISTINA

CHRISTINA
(into the phone)
Mother? I'm sick.

CUT TO:

128 INT. MANHATTAN HOSPITAL 128

Joan and Carol Ann walk quickly down the hallway. A strong-looking 50-year-old WOMAN, smartly dressed with a short haircut, steps out to introduce herself.

WOMAN
Miss Crawford, I'm Belinda Rosenberg, Christina's producer.

The DOCTOR moves toward them from an examining room. He's in a hurry, but pauses briefly.

DOCTOR
It's an ovarian tumor. We have to operate now.

CUT TO:

129 INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - DAY 129

Joan, Carol Ann and the producer stand as the Doctor from the previous scene approaches.

DOCTOR
Good news. It's benign. She'll need a couple of weeks to recuperate.

CUT TO:

130 INT. CHRISTINA'S HOSPITAL ROOM - AFTERNOON (NEXT DAY) 130

Christina is lying in bed with intravenous tubes in her arm. There are lots of flowers. She's quite pale and is sitting up with pillows propping her. She is dozing slightly. A NURSE rushes in and switches on her television.

130 CONTINUED: 130

NURSE
Your TV show's on; don't you want to watch?

CHRISTINA
(weakly)
To see how well they manage without me?

NURSE
To see your mother! They just announced your mother has agreed to stand in for you until you're well.

CHRISTINA
She can't! My character is twenty-eight years old!

131 ANGLE ON TV SCREEN 131

The commercial on the station finishes and Joan appears on the screen. She is wearing one of Christina's costumes, a mini-skirt, which serves to heighten the inappropriateness of the occasion.

Joan appears to be drunk. She looks disoriented, and slightly desperate, searching for the cue cards, slurring her words.

132 CHRISTINA 132

turns white as she stares in horrified fascination as her mother walks across the soap opera room shakily.

JOAN
(on TV)
Bill, I... uh... could you, uh...

ACTOR
(on TV, covering for her)
Could I call Cindy for you?

133 INT. SET OF SOAP OPERA 133

The CAMERA GOES INSIDE the television screen and we are on the set of the soap opera, which is being telecast live.

(CONTINUED)

133 CONTINUED: 133

The crew stands around the set, looking at each other with nervous embarrassment.

JOAN
(in character)
Yes, she wants... uh...

Joan squints at the cue card underneath the television camera. The actor covers for her again.

ACTOR
I know that she wants to marry David. But what about his wife?

Soap opera MUSIC comes up and the red light goes off on top of the television camera. Belinda Rosenberg, the producer, hurries over to Joan, trying to be diplomatic while under terrible strain.

BELINDA
Miss Crawford, are you all right?

JOAN
(shakey as hell)
I'm fine. Just nerves. Give me a drink and I'll be fine.

BELINDA
We've only got another seventy seconds. You're doing swell. Just keep finding those cue cards.

JOAN
Tell them to hold them up a little higher. I couldn't see the damn things. That's why I went wrong, you see --

Joan's attitude is not one of anger, but of a liquor-induced self-assurance. The crew members and other embarrassed cast try not to look at her.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
In ten, please; nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one...

* The Assistant Director gives the cue and Joan steps forward. *

BRUCE
Maybe we should elope.

JOAN
(in character)
No. Absolutely not.

(CONTINUED)

* 133 CONTINUED: 133 *

BRUCE
I was afraid of that.

JOAN
(in character)
Be serious now. Mother and
I have to make plans today.

BRUCE
(only half so)
I was serious -- think of
all the work we'd save your
mother.

JOAN
(in character)
Mom loves every minute of it.

BRUCE
(laughs)
Oh well.

JOAN
(in character)
Don't you have any more
romantic ideas?

BRUCE
(hopefully)
A small simple ceremony?

JOAN
(in character)
(very much in charge)
It'll be grand...don't worry
about a thing.

134 INT. CHRISTINA'S HOSPITAL ROOM 134

where she is once again watching Joan on the television screen.

(CONTINUED)

134 CONTINUED: (2)

INT. CHRISTINA'S HOSPITAL ROOM - SAME TIME - DAY

Christina looks at the image of her mother on the screen. Christina winces in embarrassment and humiliation.

CHRISTINA
(to nurse)
Shut it off. Please.

CUT TO:

135 INT. CHRISTINA'S NEW, LARGER APARTMENT - NIGHT 135

Several more years have passed. DOORBELL RINGS and Christina opens door to admit Carol Ann who is carrying a see-through plastic bag which contains an evening dress and a small suitcase which contains coordinated * shoes, bag, jewelry, etc. Within Christina's apartment * are various large packed boxes including wardrobe boxes all identified by an inter continental mover. Her apartment has all the evidence of someone in the midst of moving.

CAROL ANN
Well, dear. Here's everything
your mother picked.

CHRISTINA
My God. I hope it fits.

CAROL ANN
Joan's arranged for a seamstress
to be here at five. She's so
proud. She took such care to
pick the right colors for you.

PHONE RINGS.

Christina moves to answer it.

CHRISTINA
(into phone)
Yes, Mommie. Yes, she's here.
It looks just fine. No, I'm
delighted. I want to do it for
you.

CUT TO:

136 INT. CRAWFORD APARTMENT - NIGHT 136

Joan is in her bedroom with an open Science and Health, Bible, and Christian Science Quarterly scattered around her. She is very frail and the spring and mattress have

(CONTINUED)

136 CONTINUED: 136

been moved to the floor so that she can get out of the bed with less pain. To her right, there is a tray with a vacuum ice bucket with it's lid off, and a white plastic pint flask of milk thrust into it. ALSO, an institutional sized bottle of one thousand Anacin tablets.

Ravaged looking though she is, she is done up in chin-strap, creams, and rubber-banded hair under a gauze bandeau, as though she were planning to report to Metro tomorrow morning. Her nightgown hangs off her. She forces her shoulders back against the pillows, and winces as her hips recoil from the pain which the motion causes. She is watching television. As Christina watched Joan on television a beat ago, now Joan studies her daughter.

CUT TO:

137 JOAN'S TELEVISION - IMAGE OF AN AWARDS BANQUET 137

A MASTER OF CEREMONIES raises his hand to signal the end of the applause.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

As the final event of this prestigious evening we bestow our organization's highest award of merit upon a woman known throughout the world, not only as an Academy Award winning actress, but also as a business woman held in high regard for her charitable, civic and professional contributions... It is an honor for me to present this award of recognition to a truly great lady, Miss Joan Crawford.

(applause)

With us tonight to accept the award on behalf of her mother is Miss Crawford's daughter, Christina.

Christina rises from her table near the dais, walks up the stairs crossing to the podium. She looks stunning in her evening gown and attractive hairdo. She graciously accepts the award from the Master of Ceremonies.

138 DURING THE FOLLOWING WE INTERCUT 138

between the healthy, vibrant Christina in a blaze of light and jewels and Joan, in her darkened bedroom watching her daughter on television. As Joan watches, she raises vodka to her lips with a trembling hand to drink.

CHRISTINA

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

(MORE)

138 CONTINUED: 138

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)

It is a privilege to be here with you tonight and accept this honor ... this award on behalf of my mother, Joan Crawford. When I spoke with her, she asked me to convey to you her deepest gratitude. She wanted so much to be here in person tonight, but as you know, prior commitments made that impossible.

(pause)

I know she would want me to say 'Thank you'... to each and every one of you who made this honor possible. And on a more personal note, I'd like to say directly to her...

Christina takes a long pause and looks straight into the camera. Then with all her heart she says:

CHRISTINA

(continuing)

Congratulations and --

(a beat)

I love you, Mommie dearest.

CUT TO:

139 INT. JOAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 139

Joan, in her half lit bedroom as tears come into her eyes and slowly run down her cheeks.

CUT TO:

139A INT. JOAN'S APARTMENT - FULL SHOT - NIGHT 139A

Carol Ann swings the door wide open, and takes herself OUT OF THE SHOT. There stands Tina, elegant, beautiful, smiling, in her hands the Award, and enters, the CAMERA PANNING with her, as the door is closed behind. This room of plastic covered furniture, plastic flowers, white rug, with its display of trophies and awards, including the Oscar, lies with the weight of time on the figure of Joan, who sits up on the couch as her daughter hands her the trophy.

CAROL ANN

It's beautiful.

(CONTINUED)

Joan looks at it without enthusiasm.

JOAN
Put it with the others.

Carol Ann takes it and does, then faces, while Tina comes to sit down beside her mother.

CLOSE TWO SHOT

There is silence, too long. Joan takes a sip from her glass.

CHRISTINA
Did you like the way it went?

JOAN
I liked the way you did it.

CHRISTINA
It was you they wanted to see.

Joan is up at that, ANGLE WIDENS, standing there facing an unseen world of awards and fans and time past.

JOAN
What would they see? I can't pretend to look like Joan Crawford any more.

Tina gets up. She wants to comfort her mother, but how. So she comes close but not too close.

CHRISTINA
They see you as they always see you. You never change in their minds just like you never change in mine.

Suddenly Joan is in tears and as when Tina was a child, so now Joan embraces her, but Tina is powerful and strong and it's Joan who is frail and weak.

VERY TIGHT SHOT, the two women, faces so close.

JOAN
Oh, Tina darling, I really wish we could live those days again and try again. I wish, I wish.

139A CONTINUED: 139A

CHRISTINA
I meant what I told the whole
world tonight. I love you.

* JOAN *
Then why are you leaving?

* CHRISTINA *
I have to. I have to try to
make my own life. There's no
real work here. Everything is
moving to California.

Joan peers into that face. Every face is always a mystery and Joan tries to read her daughter's. Then she steps away.

MOVING SHOT that takes her to her trophies where she retrieves the one from that night. And now this old woman, draws on her inner strength, her will, that fierce determination that made her life possible. She accepts the award. ANGLE WIDENS TO INCLUDE Tina watching.

JOAN
Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.
It is a privilege to be here
tonight and accept this honor...
and on a more personal note I'd
like to say directly to my
daughter... I love you, Christina,
darling.

Joan turns away and returns the trophy to its place.

JOAN
(continuing; as
she does)
I really do, Tina, darling, I
really do.

CUT TO:

140 INT. FUNERAL HOME - NEW YORK CITY - DAY 140

We OPEN ON A FULL CLOSEUP of Christina in tears. This is a MATCH CUT from Joan's tear-stained face which we just left.

CAMERA SLOWLY PANS DOWN to reveal Joan in her coffin. She is frail in death, even thinner looking than she was in the preceeding scenes.

Christina is alone in the room having the first viewing of her mother's body. CAMERA SLOWLY MOVES UP OFF Joan, BACK TO Christina's face as she looks down lovingly at her dead mother.

(CONTINUED)

140 CONTINUED: 140

CHRISTINA
(almost inaudible)
I did, you know. I always did love you...

CUT TO:

141 DOORWAY - VIEWING ROOM 141

as her brother Christopher, now grown, and DAVID, Tina's husband, enter quietly. Solicitously, they move to Christina's side. Christina and Christopher embrace as David stands a few feet away.

CHRISTINA
(softly to her brother)
You okay?

CHRISTOPHER
Yes. You?

CHRISTINA
I'm okay. You met my husband, David?

CHRISTOPHER
Yes.

Christopher approaches the coffin and takes a look at his mother. Christina moves to David's side who puts his arm around her. After a moment, Christopher turns away from the coffin.

DAVID
(sympathetically to Christina and Christopher)
Let's go out and get some air.

With his arm around Christina, and a hand on Christopher's shoulder, he shepherds the grieving children from the room.

CUT TO:

142 FUNERAL RECEPTION ROOM - DAY 142

As the three emerge from the viewing room, they are descended on by an unctuous FUNERAL DIRECTOR.

(CONTINUED)

142 CONTINUED: 142

Reverentially to Christina -- but unable to restrain his enthusiasm.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR
Miss Crawford, I've always been such a fan of your mother's. I do hope you feel we've done her justice. Actually, I worked from my own personally autographed publicity still of your mother.

CHRISTINA
(mumbles)
Yes, of course. Thank you very much.

DAVID
Thank you.

David moves Christina and Christopher away from the mortician. They are almost to the exit when they are stopped by Carol Ann -- now in her mid-seventies. She is frail, worn and grieving. She goes straight to Christina and the two embrace and hold each other. They are racked with emotion. Christopher and David stand aside. After a long beat; Carol Ann speaks softly to Christina.

CAROL ANN
She always loved you so very much, Tina.

CHRISTINA
Did she, Carol Ann? Did she? I want to believe that. I need so to be able to believe that...

The two women embrace again, holding each other tightly, fiercely, almost afraid to let each other go.

CUT TO:

143 INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - DAY 143

Christina, seated with David and Christopher. All three are quite formally dressed. On the other side of the desk is a distinguished-looking LAWYER. He turns the pages of a will. Christopher turns toward Christina. She glances at him and he gives her a comforting smile. She smiles in return, with tears brimming.

(CONTINUED)

The Lawyer stops turning pages and stares at the page in front of him.

LAWYER
(solemnly)
Here we are: this is the section pertaining to you and Christopher.

Christina and Christopher look at each other again while the Lawyer examines the page. There is tension, anticipation.

LAWYER
(continuing; after a pause -- he reads)
'IT IS MY INTENTION TO MAKE NO PROVISION HEREIN FOR MY DAUGHTER CHRISTINA, AND MY SON, CHRISTOPHER ... FOR REASONS WHICH ARE WELL KNOWN TO THEM.'

The Lawyer slides the page across the desk.

Christina and Christopher look at one another, shocked expressions on their faces. Christina stares down at the well.

CHRISTOPHER
As usual, she has the last word.

CAMERA SLOWLY ANGLES IN ON A CLOSE SHOT of Christina. She is staring at the brutal words before her. Finally, she looks up.

CHRISTINA
(softly)
Does she?

The SHOT SLOWLY BLURS.